

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

COPY

GRAY  
May 16, 1940

1 p.m.

NO DISTRIBUTION

AMERICAN EMBASSY

LONDON

872

URGENT. ~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~ FOR THE AMBASSADOR.

Your 1216, May 15, 6 p.m.

Please transmit the following message from the President  
to the former naval person:

QUOTE I have just received your message and I am sure it  
is unnecessary for me to say that I am most happy to continue  
our private correspondence as we have in the past.

I am, of course, giving every possible consideration to the  
suggestions made in your message. I shall take up your specific  
proposals one by one.

First, with regard to the possible loan of forty or fifty  
of our older destroyers. As you know a step of that kind could  
not be taken except with the specific authorization of the  
Congress and I am not certain that it would be wise for that  
suggestion to be made to the Congress at this moment. Further-  
more, it seems to me doubtful, from the standpoint of our own  
defense requirements, which must inevitably be linked with the  
defense requirements of this hemisphere and with our obligations

in the

in the Pacific, whether we could dispose even temporarily of these destroyers. Furthermore, even if we were able to take the step you suggest, it would be at least six or seven weeks at a minimum, as I see it, before these vessels could undertake active service under the British flag.

Second. We are now doing everything within our power to make it possible for the Allied Governments to obtain the latest types of aircraft in the United States.

Third. If Mr. Purvis may receive immediate instructions to discuss the question of anti-aircraft equipment and ammunition with the appropriate authorities here in Washington, the most favorable consideration will be given to the request made in the light of our own defense needs and requirements.

Fourth. Mr. Purvis has already taken up with the appropriate authorities here the purchase of steel in the United States and I understand that satisfactory arrangements have been made.

Fifth. I shall give further consideration to your suggestion with regard to the visit of the United States Squadron to Irish ports.

Sixth. As you know, the American fleet is now concentrated at Hawaii where it will remain at least for the time being.

I shall communicate with you again as soon as I feel able to make a final decision with regard to some of the other matters dealt with in your message and I hope you will feel free to communicate with me in this way at any time.

- 3 -

The best of luck to you. UNQUOTE

Franklin Roosevelt.

HULL

(SW)

U:SW:IJ

13.  
4  
May 30, 1940.

My dear Churchill:-

Ever so many thanks for that remarkably interesting story of the Battle of the River Plate -- a grand job by your three cruisers.

You are much in my thoughts. I need not tell you that.

As ever yours,

Right Honorable Winston Churchill,  
Prime Minister,  
London,  
England.



THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

September 23, 1940

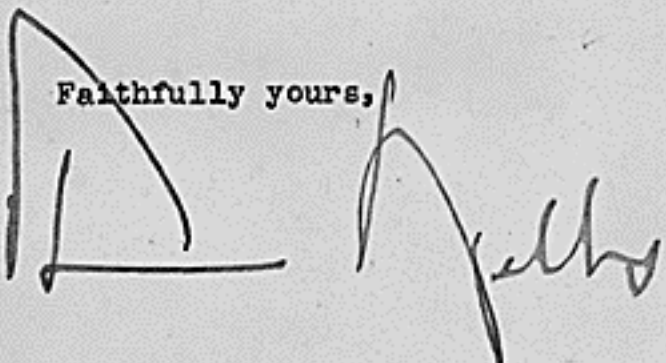
My dear Mr. President:

I am submitting to you herewith a suggested answer to Mr. Churchill's message to you of September 22.

General Marshall has told me that the loading of these rifles is going on day and night and that the details for the transfer of the rifles to the British Purchasing Commission are being concluded through the U. S. Steel Corporation.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,



Enc.

The President,  
The White House.

*H. Britain*  
4

September 23, 1940

My dear Mr. President:

I am submitting to you herewith a suggested answer to Mr. Churchill's message to you of September 22.

General Marshall has told me that the loading of these rifles is going on day and night and that the details for the transfer of the rifles to the British Purchasing Commission are being concluded through the U. S. Steel Corporation.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

Sumner Welles

Enc.

The President,

The White House.

*For original of this letter and Conf reply to "Former Naval Person" of Sept 23, 1940 from H.B.  
See: Welles - Danner 1 - 1940*

NOT TO BE RECORDED OR CONFIRMED UNTIL THIS COUPON HAS BEEN DETACHED BY THE TELEGRAPH OPERATOR

PREPARING OFFICE  
WILL INDICATE WHETHER

Collect  
Charge Department  
OR  
Charge to  
\$

# TELEGRAM SENT

~~Department of State~~

THE WHITE HOUSE

Washington,

TO BE TRANSMITTED  
CONFIDENTIAL CODE  
NONCONFIDENTIAL CODE  
PARTIAL  
PLAIN

June 13, 1940

AMERICAN EMBASSY

PARIS

~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~ FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM THE  
PRESIDENT.

Please do whatever may be possible to communicate  
the following message immediately to the Prime Minister:

QUOTE Your message <sup>of June 10</sup> has moved me very deeply. As I  
have already stated to you and to Mr. Churchill, this  
Government is doing everything in its power to make avail-  
able to the Allied Governments the material they so urgently  
require and our efforts to do still more are being re-  
doubled. *This is so because of our faith in and our support  
of the ideals for which the Allies are fighting.*

The magnificent resistance of the French <sup>and British</sup> armies has  
profoundly impressed the American people. [They hope and  
they believe that the efforts of the Allied Governments  
to overcome the powers which are seeking to impose on the  
entire world the policies of force and tyranny can and must  
be successful in order that the cause of human liberty and

Enciphered by \_\_\_\_\_

Sent by operator \_\_\_\_\_ M., \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED



NOT TO BE RECORDED OR CONFIRMED UNTIL THIS COUPON HAS BEEN DETACHED BY THE TELEGRAPH OPERATOR

PREPARING OFFICE  
WILL INDICATE WHETHER

Collect

Charge Department

OR

Charge to

\$

## TELEGRAM SENT

**Department of State**

THE WHITE HOUSE

Washington,

TO BE TRANSMITTED  
CONFIDENTIAL CODE  
NONCONFIDENTIAL CODE  
PARTIAL  
PLAIN

-2-

democracy may triumph and thereby real peace may once again be established. I have the firm conviction that however desperate or dark the situation may now seem, if the conflict is continued with the magnificent courage so far displayed, the forces of evil cannot at the end prevail.]

UNQUOTE

*When this message is delivered please make it entirely clear that it is personal and private and not for publication.*

U:SW:MW

Enciphered by \_\_\_\_\_

Sent by operator \_\_\_\_\_ M., \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_



NOT TO BE RECORDED OR CONFIRMED UNTIL THIS COUPON HAS BEEN DETACHED BY THE TELEGRAPH OPERATOR

PREPARING OFFICE  
WILL INDICATE WHETHER

Collect

Charge Department  
OR

Charge to  
\$

## TELEGRAM SENT

**Department of State**

THE WHITE HOUSE

Washington.

TO BE TRANSMITTED  
CONFIDENTIAL CODE  
NONCONFIDENTIAL CODE  
PARTIAL  
PLAIN

-2-

democracy may triumph and thereby real peace may once again be established. I have the firm conviction that however desperate or dark the situation may now seem, if the conflict is continued with the magnificent courage so far displayed, the forces of evil cannot at the end prevail.]

UNQUOTE

When this message is delivered please make it entirely clear that it is personal and private and not for publication.

U:SW:MN

Enciphered by \_\_\_\_\_

Sent by operator \_\_\_\_\_ M., \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_

Hyde Park, N. Y.,  
August 19, 1940.

My dear Churchill:-

I think this will interest you. It was over two weeks on its way from Berlin and coming from an American, long a resident in Germany, it has especial value. The writer was, I think, inclined to be pro-Nazi up to the time of the Munich Conference.

We are getting excellent reports of the fine job your Air Force has done the past week.

As ever yours,

The Right Honorable Winston Churchill, P.C.,  
Prime Minister,  
London,  
England.

(Enclosure) Copy of Alexander Kirk's letter of July 29, 1940.

Hyde Park, N. Y.,  
August 19, 1940.

Dear Mackenzie:-

I think this will interest you.  
It was over two weeks on its way from Berlin  
and coming from an American, long a resident  
in Germany, it has especial value. The  
writer was, I think, inclined to be pro-Nazi  
up to the time of the Munich Conference.

As ever yours,

The Right Honorable  
William Lyon Mackenzie King, C.M.G.,  
Prime Minister of Canada,  
Ottawa,  
Ontario,  
Canada.

(Enclosure) Copy of Alexander Kirk's letter of July 29, 1940.

Hyde Park, N. Y.,  
August 19, 1940.

Dear Alex:-

It is good, indeed, to get your letter --  
and your "evaluation" of the situation conforms  
to my own thinking.

You will have read of my meeting with  
Mackenzie King on Saturday. A complete meeting  
of the minds is always satisfactory and, in-  
cidentally, both the American and Canadian  
programs are doing well.

My best wishes to you,

Always sincerely,

Alexander Kirk, Esq.,  
American Embassy,  
Berlin,  
Germany.



Berlin, July 29, 1940.

My dear Mr. President:

I fully realize that you are not to be importuned with lengthy or superfluous messages but there is a matter much on my mind and one which I dare not treat by telegraphic report.

It is perhaps anomalous that at a time when the entire world seems to be concentrated on the mechanics of war the main emphasis in rumor and report, at least insofar as Berlin is concerned, has lately been on the subject of peace between England and Germany. It is futile to argue about the possible origin of these rumors for it is as easy to find support for the opinion that they are inspired as it is to believe that they are the manifestation of a natural inclination on

the

The President,

The White House.

the part of war-tired peoples. It is useless also to test the sincerity of these expressions, for again it is not only impossible to place the responsibility for their utterance on any particular source, but also to strike an accurate balance of the relative advantages from the German standpoint of an immediate peace with England. The fact remains that talk is insistent on this subject and within the last few days three private individuals, an American, a Hollander and a Swede, have brought me stories of peace efforts allegedly sponsored by high Nazi officials, but decidedly not by Hitler himself -- stories which I could not report in detail owing to the certain danger involved to the individuals themselves.

The purpose of this letter, however, is not to evaluate these rumored activities in relation to Nazi aims or policies. My purpose is solely to register my profound conviction that any concession on the part of the British Government now would destroy forever the chance of eradicating the forces which are threatening our own civilization. In saying this I am not thinking of England itself for, if I did, I might hesitate at the thought of the terrific devastation which may well be in prospect and of which the beginning is now being set

from

from week to week. Hitler has always tried to attain his aims at the lowest possible cost to himself and has so far triumphed in that policy, but there has never been any doubt that in the last analysis he would and he must pay any price to attain his ends if they can not be otherwise achieved. There is every reason to believe that he wants to finish this particular phase of the war, whether for the purpose of turning his war machine in other directions or of indulging in expressing his colossal ego through rebuilding in his own way on the ruins of what he will have destroyed. A short war requires, in the first place, the speedy subjugation of England either through the peace he might be ready to negotiate now or through the same or worse methods than those which prevailed in France, and, in the second place, the certainty that with England silenced the forces of democracy would be annihilated. As regards the first requirement, the greatest triumph for Hitler would be a humiliating and unjust peace wrenched from England without a fight, for the hope is justified that even the conquest of the British Isles need not end resistance. As for the second requirement the greatest factor is our own country and, I firmly believe, the controlling factor. Hitler has never lost sight of the United States although there are times when



he believes that he can disregard our part on the ground of the time element involved. Within the last few weeks, however, I feel that his anxiety on our account has redoubled. He sees what we are doing and that we shall not stop, and he must know that we constitute a problem which even he can not solve. It is natural to say that there is a limit to a one-man show and that in time Hitler must eradicate himself. That may be true but the rate of his progress reduces the saving grace of the time factor and the force which he has developed can be stopped only by force. The first stand in this struggle is for England to hold out against any peace efforts, and the second is for the British to exert all their material and moral equipment to resist an attack and continue the fight. The greatest part, however, I believe is ours. We must encourage in every way those who are in the first line of battle. We must prove our purpose in fact and example and we must prove it speedily and unflaggingly. We must hold to the principles which we know are right although their implementation may require newer methods and at the right moment we must be ready to say the word and do the deed that will save from destruction all that we know makes life a good and noble thing. It is the

conviction



conviction of the significance of our part in the struggle, both for our own salvation as well as for the benefit of the world, that induces me to write and I hope that you will consider what I have said in that light.

I can not close without expressing to you my gratitude for the consideration which you showed me during my stay in Washington and I need not say how gratified I am that the continuity of your policies, of which we ourselves were always assured, has now been brought to the conviction of the governments and peoples abroad.

Very faithfully yours,

Alexander Kirk.

*K. A. L.*  
*Summary*  
*4*

August 22, 1940.

Dear Joe:-

The President has asked me to send you the enclosed letter for Mr. Churchill. Will you please be good enough to see that he gets it?

We are all thinking of you much these days.

With affectionate regards in which the President joins,

As ever,

Honorable Joseph P. Kennedy,  
American Embassy,  
London,  
England.

(Enclosure)

My dear Lord Lothian:

Thank you for your letter of July 6th in which you were good enough to inform me of the appointment of the Duke of Windsor as Governor of the Bahamas. Will you express my appreciation to the Prime Minister for his thoughtfulness in desiring me to have advance information in this matter.

Very sincerely yours,

His Excellency  
The Right Honorable  
The Marquess of Lothian, C.H.,  
British Ambassador.

8.13  
4

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

July 11, 1940

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

For preparation of reply  
to Lothian.

F. D. R.

Enclosures

fdr/tmb

Secret letter to the President 7/9/40 from Lord Lothian, British Embassy, enclosing a copy of a telegram to the President from the Prime Minister regarding the appt. of the Duke of Windsor as Governor of the Bahamas. Ek Says the Prime Minister was particularly anxious that the P. should have advance information of this appt. However due to the receipt of the message in a corrupt form and also due to leakage it was necessary to arrange for the appt. to be announced "this evening by the British Broadcasting Company."



*file  
personal*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

July 12, 1940

My dear Mr. President:

With reference to your memorandum of July 11, 1940,  
I am returning herewith Lord Lothian's letter, together  
with a draft of a reply which you may care to send to  
him.

Faithfully yours,

*Cordell Hull*

Enclosures:

1. From Lord Lothian,  
July 9, 1940.
2. Draft.

The President,  
The White House.

JUL 12 1940

My dear Mr. President:

With reference to your memorandum of July 11, 1940,  
I am returning herewith Lord Lothian's letter, together  
with a draft of a reply which you may care to send to  
him.

Faithfully yours,

*Cordell Hull*

Enclosures:

1. From Lord Lothian,  
July 9, 1940.
2. Draft.

The President,

The White House.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

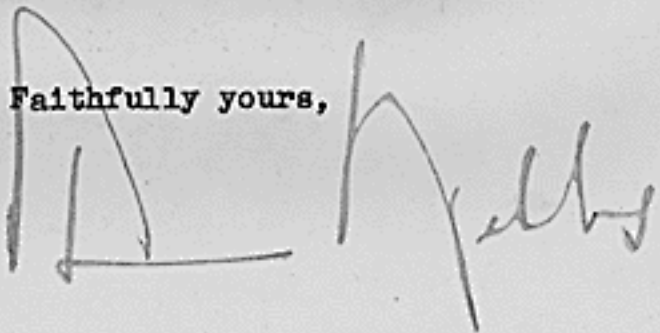
June 13, 1940

My dear Mr. President:

In accordance with your request, I am returning to you herewith the original drafts of the telegrams sent this morning after our conference.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,



Encs.

The President,  
The White House.

June 13, 1940

My dear Mr. President:

In accordance with your request, I am returning to you herewith the original drafts of the telegrams sent this morning after our conference.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,

Encs.

The President,

The White House.



For Raymond

personally  
I am particularly impressed by  
your ~~the~~ declaration that France will  
continue the fight on behalf of  
democracy even if it means slow  
withdrawal from North Africa and  
the Atlantic. It is most important  
to remember that the French and British  
fleets continue mastery of the Atlantic  
and other oceans. Also to remember  
that vital materials from the outside  
world are necessary to maintain all  
armies.

I am also greatly heartened by what  
P.M. Churchill said a few days ago  
about the ~~continued~~ continued resistance  
of the British Empire and this ~~power~~ determination  
would seem to apply equally to the  
great French Empire all over the  
world. Naval power in world affairs  
still carries the lessons of history, as  
Admiral Doreau will know.

*File  
Confidential  
LB  
4-40*

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 21st, 1940

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein a message  
for you from the Prime Minister which was  
telegraphed from London this afternoon.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

*Harold Butler*

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,  
Washington, D. C.

I have now decided to ask for your formal agrément to the appointment of Lord Halifax as our Ambassador to the United States. I need not tell you what a loss this is to me personally and to the War Cabinet. I feel however that the transaction of business and the relationship between our two countries, and also the contact with you, Mr. President, are of such supreme consequence to the outcome of the war that it is my duty to place at your side the most eminent of my colleagues, and one who knows the whole story as it unfolds at the summit.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  

---

THE SECRETARY

December 17, 1940

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

I am sending you this copy of  
London's telegram No. 4066 in the event  
you failed to see the one I sent you on  
December 13.

C.H.



REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

EG

A portion of this message  
must be closely paraphrased  
before being communicated  
to anyone. (B)

London

Dated December 13, 1940

Rec'd 1:40 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

TRIPLE PRIORITY.

4066, December 13, 6 p.m.

**CONFIDENTIAL** AND PERSONAL FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM  
FORMER NAVAL PERSON.

(GRAY) "One. I am sure you will be pleased about  
our (\*) in Libya. This coupled with his Albanian re-  
verses may go hard with Mussolini if we make good use  
of our success. The full results of the battle are  
not yet to hand but if Italy can be broken our affairs  
will be more hopeful than they were four or five months  
ago.

Two. North Atlantic transport remains the prime  
anxiety. Undoubtedly Hitler will augment his U-boats  
and air attack on shipping and operate ever farther  
into the ocean. Now that we are denied the use of Irish  
ports and airfields our difficulties strain our flotillas  
to the utmost limit. We have so far only been able to  
bring a very few of your fifty destroyers into action on  
account

-2- #4066, December 13, 6 p.m. from London

account of the many defects which they naturally develop when exposed to Atlantic weather after having been laid up so long. I am arranging to have a very full technical account prepared of renovations and improvements that have to be made in the older classes of destroyers to fit them for the present task, and this may be of use to you in regard to your own older flotillas.

THREE. In the meanwhile we are so hard pressed at sea that we cannot undertake to carry any longer the 400,000 tons of feeding stuffs and fertilizers which we have hitherto convoyed to Eire through all the attacks of the enemy. We need this tonnage for our own supply and we do not need the food which Eire has been sending us. We must now concentrate on essentials and the Cabinet propose to let de Valera know that we cannot go on supplying him under present conditions. He will, of course, have plenty of food for his people but they will not have the prosperous trading they are making now. I am sorry about this but we must think of our own self-preservation and use for vital purposes our own tonnage brought in through so many perils. Perhaps this may loosen things up and make him more ready to  
consider

-3- #4066, December 13, 6 p.m. from London

consider common interests. I should like to know quite privately what your reactions would be if and when we are forced to concentrate our own tonnage upon the supply of Great Britain. We also do not feel able in present circumstances to continue the heavy subsidies we have hitherto been paying to the Irish agricultural producers. You will realize also that our merchant seamen as well as public opinion generally take it much amiss that we should have to carry Irish supplies through air and U-boat attacks and subsidize them handsomely when de Valera is quite content to sit happy and see us strangled." (END GRAY)

JOHNSON

KLP

(\*) Apparent omission

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

~~SECRET~~

December 8th, 1940

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein the special letter addressed to you by Mr. Winston Churchill, about which I told you, and which he wanted you to get while you are on board your cruiser. This letter has been sent from London by telegram.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Yours very sincerely,

*L. L. L.*

P.S. I am sending a few extra figures about shipping to Harry Hopkins who asked me for them.

*Hope you are having a most pleasant holiday.*

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,  
Washington, D.C.

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED



BRITISH EMBASSY,

WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 7th 1940.

My Dear Mr. President,

As we reach the end of this year I feel that you will expect me to lay before you the prospects for 1941. I do so strongly and confidently because it seems to me that the vast majority of American citizens have recorded their conviction that the safety of the United States as well as the future of our two democracies and the kind of civilisation for which they stand are bound up with the survival and independence of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Only thus can those bastions of sea-power, upon which the control of the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans depends, be preserved in faithful and friendly hands. The control of the Pacific by the United States Navy and of the Atlantic by the British Navy is indispensable to the security of the trade routes of both our countries and the surest means to preventing the war from reaching the shores of the United States.

2. There is another aspect. It takes between three and four years to convert the industries of a modern state to war purposes. Saturation point is reached when the maximum industrial effort that can be spared from civilian needs has been applied to war production. Germany certainly reached this point by the end of 1939. We in the British Empire are now only about half-way through the second year. The United States, I should suppose, was by no means so far advanced as we. Moreover, I understand that immense

programmes/

programmes of naval, military and air defence are now on foot in the United States, to complete which certainly two years are needed. It is our British duty in the common interest as also for our own survival to hold the front and grapple with Nazi power until the preparations of the United States are complete. Victory may come before the two years are out; but we have no right to count upon it to the extent of relaxing any effort that is humanly possible. Therefore I submit with very great respect for your good and friendly consideration that there is a solid identity of interest between the British Empire and the United States while these conditions last. It is upon this footing that I venture to address you.

3. The form which this war has taken and seems likely to hold does not enable us to match the immense armies of Germany in any theatre where their main power can be brought to bear. We can however by the use of sea power and air power meet the German armies in the regions where only comparatively small forces can be brought into action. We must do our best to prevent German domination of Europe spreading into Africa and into Southern Asia. We have also to maintain in constant readiness in this Island armies strong enough to make the problem of an overseas invasion insoluble. For these purposes we are forming as fast as possible, as you are already aware, between fifty and sixty divisions. Even if the United States was our ally instead of our friend/



friend and indispensable partner we should not ask for a large American expeditionary army. Shipping, not men, is the limiting factor and the power to transport munitions and supplies claims priority over the movement by sea of large numbers of soldiers.

4. The first half of 1940 was a period of disaster for the Allies and for the Empire. The last five months have witnessed a strong and perhaps unexpected recovery by Great Britain; fighting alone but with invaluable aid in munitions and in destroyers placed at our disposal by the great Republic of which you are for the third time chosen Chief.

5. The danger of Great Britain being destroyed by a swift overwhelming blow has for the time being very greatly receded. In its place there is a long, gradually maturing danger, less sudden and less spectacular but equally deadly. This mortal danger is the steady and increasing diminution of sea tonnage. We can endure the shattering of our dwellings and the slaughter of our civilian population by indiscriminate air attacks and we hope to parry these increasingly as our science develops and to repay them upon military objectives in Germany as our Air Force more nearly approaches the strength of the enemy. The decision for 1941 lies upon the seas; unless we can establish our ability to feed this Island, to import munitions of all kinds which we need, unless we can move our armies to the various theatres where Hitler and his confederate Mussolini must be met,

and/

and maintain them there and do all this with the assurance of being able to carry it on till the spirit of the continental dictators is broken, we may fall by the way and the time needed by the United States to complete her defensive preparations may not be forthcoming. It is therefore in shipping and in the power to transport across the oceans, particularly the Atlantic Ocean, that in 1941 the crunch of the whole war will be found. If on the other hand we are able to move the necessary tonnage to and fro across the salt water indefinitely, it may well be that the application of superior air power to the German homeland and the rising anger of the German and other Nazi-gripped populations will bring the agony of civilization to a merciful and glorious end. But do not let us underrate the task.

6. Our shipping losses, the figures for which in recent months are appended, have been on a scale almost comparable to that of the worst years of the last war. In the 5 weeks ending November 3rd the losses reached a total of 420,300 tons. Our estimation of the annual tonnage which ought to be imported in order to maintain our war effort at full strength is 43,000,000 tons; the tonnage entering in September was only at the rate of 37,000,000 tons and in October at 38,000,000 tons. Were the diminution to continue at this rate it would be fatal, unless indeed immensely greater replenishment than anything at present/



present in sight could be achieved in time. Although we are doing all we can to meet this situation by new methods, the difficulty of limiting the losses is obviously much greater than in the last war. We lack the assistance of the French Navy, the Italian Navy and the Japanese Navy, and above all the United States Navy, which was of such vital help to us during the culminating years. The enemy commands the ports all around the northern and western coast of France. He is increasingly basing his submarines, flying boats and combat planes on these ports and on the islands off the French coast. We lack the use of ports or territory in Eire in which to organise our coastal patrols by air and sea. In fact, we have now only one effective passage of entry to the British Isles namely, the northern approach, against which the enemy is increasingly concentrating, reaching ever farther out by U-boat action and long distance bombing. In addition, there have for some months been merchant ship raiders both in the Atlantic and in the Indian Oceans. And now we have powerful warship raiders to contend with as well. We need ships both to hunt down and to escort. Large as are our resources and preparations we do not possess enough.

7. The next six or seven months bring the relative battleship strength in home waters to a smaller margin than is satisfactory. The "Bismark" and the "Tirpitz" will certainly be in service in

January/

January. We have already the "King George V" and hope to have the "Prince of Wales" at the same time. These modern ships are of course far better armoured, especially against air attack, than vessels like the "Rodney" and "Nelson" designed twenty years ago. We have recently had to use the "Rodney" on trans-Atlantic escort and at any time when numbers are so small, a mine or a torpedo may alter decisively the strength of the line of battle. We get relief in June when the "Duke of York" will be ready and will be still better off at the end of 1941 when the "Anson" also will have joined. But these two first class, modern, thirty-five thousand ton, fifteen inch gun German battleships force us to maintain a concentration never previously necessary in this war.

8. We hope that the two Italian "Littorios" will be out of action for a while and anyway they are not so dangerous as if they were manned by the Germans. Perhaps they might be ! We are indebted to you for your help about the "Richelieu" and the "Jean Bart" and I daresay that will be all right. But, Mr. President, as no one will see more clearly than you, we have during these months to consider for the first time in this war, a fleet action in which the enemy will have two ships at least as good as our two best and only two modern ones. It will be impossible to reduce our strength in the Mediterranean because of the attitude of Turkey and indeed the whole position in the Eastern basin depends upon our having



a strong fleet there. The older un-modernized battleships will have to go for convoy. Thus even in the battleship class we are at full extension.

9. There is a second field of danger: the Vichy Government may either by joining Hitler's new order in Europe or through some manoeuvre such as forcing us to attack an expedition despatched by sea against free French Colonies, find an excuse for ranging with the Axis Powers the very considerable undamaged naval forces still under its control. If the French Navy were to join the Axis, the control of West Africa would pass immediately into their hands with the gravest consequences to our communications between the northern and southern Atlantic, and also affect Dakar and of course thereafter South America.

10. A third sphere of danger is in the Far East. Here it seems clear that the Japanese are thrusting Southward through Indo China to Saigon and other naval and air bases, thus bringing them within a comparatively short distance of Singapore and the Dutch East Indies. It is reported that the Japanese are preparing five good divisions for possible use as an overseas expeditionary force. We have to-day no forces in the Far East capable of dealing with this situation should it develop.

11. In the face of these dangers, we must try to use the year 1941 to build up such a supply of weapons, particularly aircraft, both by increased output at home in spite of bombardment, and through ocean-borne supplies, as will lay the foundation of victory. In view of the difficulty and magnitude of this task, as outlined by all the facts I have set forth to which many others/

others could be added, I feel entitled, nay bound, to lay before you the various ways in which the United States could give supreme and decisive help to what is, in certain aspects, the common cause.

12. The prime need is to check or limit the loss of tonnage on the Atlantic approaches to our Islands. This may be achieved both by increasing the naval forces which cope with attacks, and by adding to the number of merchant ships on which we depend. For the first purpose there would seem to be the following alternatives:

(1) the reassertion by the United States of the doctrine of the freedom of the seas from illegal and barbarous warfare in accordance with the decisions reached after the late Great War, and as freely accepted and defined by Germany in 1935. From this, the United States ships should be free to trade with countries against which there is not an effective legal blockade.

(2) It would, I suggest, follow that protection should be given to this lawful trading by United States forces i.e. escorting battleships, cruisers, destroyers and air flotillas. Protection would be immediately more effective if you were able to obtain bases in Eire for the duration of the war. I think it is improbable that such protection would provoke a declaration of war by Germany upon the United States though probably sea incidents of a dangerous character would from time to time occur. Hitler has shown himself inclined to avoid the Kaiser's mistake. He does not wish to be drawn into war with the United States until he has gravely undermined the power of Great Britain. His

maxim/



maxim is "one at a time". The policy I have ventured to outline, or something like it, would constitute a decisive act of constructive non-belligerency by the United States, and more than any other measure would make it certain that British resistance could be effectively prolonged for the desired period and victory gained.

(3) Failing the above, the gift, loan or supply of a large number of American vessels of war, above all destroyers already in the Atlantic, is indispensable to the maintenance of the Atlantic route. Further, could not United States naval forces extend their sea control over the American side of the Atlantic, so as to prevent molestation by enemy vessels of the approaches to the new line of naval and air bases which the United States is establishing in British islands in the Western Hemisphere. The strength of the United States naval forces is such that the assistance in the Atlantic that they could afford us, as described above, would not jeopardise control over the Pacific.

(4) We should also then need the good offices of the United States and the whole influence of its Government continually exerted, to procure for Great Britain the necessary facilities upon the southern and western shores of Eire for our flotillas, and still more important, for our aircraft, working westward into the Atlantic. If it were proclaimed an American interest that the resistance of Great Britain should be prolonged and the Atlantic route kept open for the important armaments now being prepared for Great Britain in

North/

North America, the Irish in the United States might be willing to point out to the Government of Eire the dangers which its present policy is creating for the United States itself.

His Majesty's Government would of course take the most effective steps beforehand to protect Ireland if Irish action exposed it to a German attack. It is not possible for us to compel the people of Northern Ireland against their will to leave the United Kingdom and join Southern Ireland. But I do not doubt that if the Government of Eire would show its solidarity with the democracies of the English speaking world at this crisis a Council of Defence of all Ireland could be set up out of which the unity of the island would probably in some form or other emerge after the war.

13. The object of the foregoing measures is to reduce to manageable proportions the present destructive losses at sea. In addition it is indispensable that the merchant tonnage available for supplying Great Britain and for the waging of the war by Great Britain with all vigour, should be substantially increased beyond the one and a quarter million tons per annum which is the utmost we can now build. The convoy system, the detours, the zig-zags, the great distances from which we now have to bring our imports, and the congestion of our western harbours, have reduced by about one third the value of our existing tonnage. To ensure final victory, not less than three million tons of additional merchant ship-building capacity will be required. Only the

United/



United States can supply this need. Looking to the future it would seem that production on a scale comparable with that of the Hog Island scheme of the last war ought to be faced for 1942. In the meanwhile, we ask that in 1941 the United States should make available to us every ton of merchant shipping, surplus to its own requirements, which it possesses or controls and should find some means of putting into our "hands" a large proportion of the merchant shipping now under construction for the National Maritime Board.

14. Moreover we look to the industrial energy of the Republic for a reinforcement of our domestic capacity to manufacture combat aircraft. Without that reinforcement reaching us in a substantial measure, we shall not achieve the massive preponderance in the air on which we must rely to loosen and disintegrate the German grip on Europe. The development of the Air Forces of the Empire provides for a total of nearly 7000 combat aircraft in the fighting squadrons by the spring of 1942, backed by about an equal number in the training units. But it is abundantly clear that this programme will not suffice to give us the weighty superiority which will force open the doors of victory. In order to achieve such superiority it is plain that we shall need the greatest production of aircraft which United States of America are capable of sending us. It is our anxious hope that in the teeth of continuing

bombardment/

bombardment we shall realize the greater part of production which we have planned in this country. But not even with the addition to our squadrons of all the aircraft which under present arrangements, we may derive from the planned output in the United States can we hope to achieve the necessary ascendancy. May I invite you then, Mr. President, to give earnest consideration to an immediate order on joint account for a further 2,000 combat aircraft a month? Of these aircraft I would submit that the highest possible proportion should be heavy bombers, the weapon on which above all others we depend to shatter the foundations of German military power. I am aware of the formidable task that this would impose upon the industrial organisation of the United States. Yet, in our heavy need, we call with confidence to the most resourceful and ingenious technicians in the world. We ask for an unexampled effort believing that it can be made.

15. You have also received information about the needs of our armies. In the munitions sphere, in spite of enemy bombing, we are making steady progress. Without your continued assistance in the supply of machine tools and in the further release from stock of certain articles we could not hope to equip as many as 50 divisions in 1941. I am grateful for the arrangements already practically completed/



completed for your aid in the equipment of the army which we have already planned and for the provision of American-type weapons for an additional 10 divisions in time for the campaign of 1942. But when the tide of dictatorship begins to recede, many countries, trying to regain their freedom, may be asking for arms, and there is no source to which they can look except to the factories of the United States. I must therefore also urge the importance of expanding to the utmost American productive capacity for small arms, artillery and tanks.

16. I am arranging to present you with a complete programme of munitions of all kinds which we seek to obtain from you, the greater part of which is of course already agreed. An important economy of time and effort will be produced if the types selected for the United States Services should, whenever possible, conform to those which have proved their merit under actual conditions of war. In this way reserves of guns and ammunition and of aeroplanes become inter-changeable and are by that very fact augmented. This is however a sphere so highly technical that I do not enlarge upon it.

17. Last of all I come to the question of finance. The more rapid and abundant the flow of munitions and ships which you are able to send us, the sooner will our dollar credits be exhausted. They are already as you know very heavily drawn upon by payments we have made to date.

Indeed/

Indeed as you know orders already placed or under negotiation, including expenditure settled or pending for creating munitions factories in the United States, many times exceed the total exchange resources remaining at the disposal of Great Britain. The moment approaches when we shall no longer be able to pay cash for shipping and other supplies. While we will do out utmost and shrink from no proper sacrifice to make payments across the exchange, I believe that you will agree that it would be wrong in principle and mutually disadvantageous in effect if, at the height of this struggle, Great Britain were to be divested of all saleable assets so that after victory was won with our blood, civilisation saved and time gained for the United States to be fully armed against all eventualities, we should stand stripped to the bone. Such a course would not be in the moral or economic interests of either of our countries. We here would be unable after the war to purchase the large balance of imports from the United States over and above the volume of our exports which is agreeable to your tariffs and domestic economy. Not only should we in Great Britain suffer cruel privations but widespread unemployment in the United States would follow the curtailment of American exporting power.

18. Moreover I do not believe the Government and people of the United States would find it in  
accordance/



accordance with the principles which guide them, to confine the help which they have so generously promised only to such munitions of war and commodities as could be immediately paid for. You may be assured that we shall prove ourselves ready to suffer and sacrifice to the utmost for the Cause, and that we glory in being its champion. The rest we leave with confidence to you and to your people, being sure that ways and means will be found which future generations on both sides of the Atlantic will approve and admire.

19. If, as I believe, you are convinced, Mr. President, that the defeat of the Nazi and Fascist tyranny is a matter of high consequence to the people of the United States and to the Western Hemisphere, you will regard this letter not as an appeal for aid, but as a statement of the minimum action necessary to the achievement of our common purpose.

I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

Winston S. Churchill.

The following figures show losses by enemy action of British, Allied and Neutral merchant tonnage for the periods given. Vessels of all tonnage are included but no commissioned ships.

<u>Week ended</u>	<u>British</u>		<u>Allied</u>		<u>Neutral</u>		<u>Total: British- Allied-Neutral</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>Gr. Tons.</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Gr. Tons</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Gr. Tons</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Gr. Tons.</u>
June 2, 1940	28	79,415	5	25,137	2	4,375	35	108,927
" 9, "	13	49,762	8	22,253	4	14,750	25	86,765
" 16, "	15	60,006	10	40,216	6	23,170	31	123,392
" 23, "	16	91,373	12	81,742	12	39,159	40	212,274
" 30, "	6	30,377	4	13,627	5	19,332	15	63,336
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>310,933</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>182,972</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100,786</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>594,694</b>
<u>Week ended</u>								
July 7, 1940	14	75,888	4	18,924	5	21,968	23	116,780
" 14, "	10	40,469	5	13,159	7	24,845	22	78,473
" 21, "	12	42,463	2	3,679	7	13,723	21	59,865
" 28, "	18	65,601	2	7,090		NIL	20	72,691
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>224,421</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>42,852</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>60,536</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>327,809</b>
<u>Week ended</u>								
Aug. 4, 1940	14	67,827	2	7,412	5	13,768	21	89,007
" 11, "	9	32,257	2	7,674	2	6,708	13	46,639
" 18, "	10	41,175	1	7,590	2	4,134	13	52,899
" 25, "	20	108,404	1	1,718	2	8,692	23	118,814
Sep. 1, "	12	62,921	5	15,038	5	18,460	22	96,419
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>312,584</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>39,432</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>51,762</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>403,778</b>
<u>Week ended</u>								
Sep. 8, 1940	13	44,975	4	18,499	3	13,715	20	77,189
" 15, "	13	55,153	4	12,575	3	7,379	20	75,107
" 22, "	22	148,704	3	13,006	5	14,425	30	176,135
" 29, "	11	56,096	4	12,119	2	7,351	17	75,566
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>304,928</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>56,199</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>42,871</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>403,997</b>
<u>Week ended</u>								
Oct. 6, 1940	8	30,886	3	5,742	1	3,687	12	40,315
" 13, "	10	52,668	3	17,537	4	14,544	17	84,749
" 20, "	34	154,279	7	24,686	6	26,816	47	205,781
" 27, "	6	9,986	2	6,874	1	1,583	9	18,443
Nov. 3, "	13	65,609	4	5,403		NIL	17	71,012
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>313,428</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>60,242</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>46,630</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>420,300</b>



<u>Week ended</u>	<u>British</u>		<u>Allied</u>		<u>Neutral</u>		<u>Total: British- Allied-Neutral</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>Gr.Tons</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Gr.Tons</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Gr.Tons</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Gr. Tons</u>
Nov.10,1940	11	69,110	2	10,236	2	8,617	15	87,963
" 17, "	15	57,977	3	15,383	1	1,316	19	74,676
" 24, "	19	75,560	3	12,415		NIL	22	87,975
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	45	202,647	8	38,034	3	9,933	56	250,614
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Grand Totals to November 24th, 1940.

372 1668,941 105 419,734 92 312,517 569 2401,192

Notes: Week ended November 24th is the last full week for which details are available and from the nature of the circumstances must be considered provisional.

For the specified period the following commissioned ships of 500 gross tons and over (formerly merchant vessels) have been lost by enemy action: 20 vessels of 183,000 gross tons approximately.

4-200  
**SECRET**

**BRITISH EMBASSY,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

December 20th, 1940

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

Dear Mr. President,

Owing to the fact that as explained in Lord Lothian's letter of December 8th the Prime Minister's letter to you of December 7th was sent to the Embassy from London by telegram, a few mistakes occurred in the text. The Prime Minister is anxious that these should be corrected and that the alterations shown in the attached list should be made in his original letter. I hope therefore that you will be good enough to arrange for these amendments to be inserted in the text of the letter as sent you by Lord Lothian.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Yours sincerely,

*Harold Butler*

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D.C.

**SECRET**

Alterations to be made in the Prime Minister's letter to the President of December 7th, 1940.

(a) Paragraph 6, 9th sentence (page 5, line 13):

For the sentence "we lack the use of ports or territory in Eire in which to organise our coastal patrols by air and sea" substitute "we are denied the use of ports or territories of Eire in which to organise our coastal patrols by air or sea".

(b) Paragraph 6, 10th sentence (page 5, line 16):

For the words "only one effective passage of entry" read "only one effective route of entry".

(c) Paragraph 14, 3rd sentence (page 11, line 18):

For the sentence beginning "The development of the air forces of the Empire" substitute the following sentence: "We are at present engaged in a programme designed to increase our strength to 7,000 first line aircraft by the Spring of 1942".

-----  
**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**



13  
4

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

Message for President Roosevelt from  
Mr. Winston Churchill, received in  
Washington on November 23rd, 1940.

---

Personal and **Secret**

Our accounts show that the situation in Spain is deteriorating and that the Peninsula is not far from the starvation point. An offer by you to dole out food month by month so long as they keep out of the war might be decisive. Small things do not count now and this is a time for very plain talk to them. The occupation by Germany of both sides of the Straits would be a grievous addition to our naval strain, already severe. The Germans would soon have batteries working by radio direction finding which would close the Straits both by night and day. With a major campaign developing in the Eastern Mediterranean and need of reinforcement and supply of our armies there all round the Cape we could not contemplate any military action on the mainland at or near the Straits. The Rock of Gibraltar will stand a long siege but what is the good of that if we cannot use the harbour or pass the Straits? Once in Morocco the Germans will work South, and U-boats and aircraft will soon be operating from Casablanca and Dakar. I need not, Mr. President, enlarge upon the trouble this will cause to us or approach of trouble to the Western Hemisphere. We must gain as much time as possible.



2 u  
m

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

Message for President Roosevelt from  
Mr. Winston Churchill, received in  
Washington on November 23rd, 1940.

---

Personal and **Secret**

Our accounts show that the situation in Spain is deteriorating and that the Peninsula is not far from the starvation point. An offer by you to dole out food month by month so long as they keep out of the war might be decisive. Small things do not count now and this is a time for very plain talk to them. The occupation by Germany of both sides of the Straits would be a grievous addition to our naval strain, already severe. The Germans would soon have batteries working by radio direction finding which would close the Straits both by night and day. With a major campaign developing in the Eastern Mediterranean and need of reinforcement and supply of our armies there all round the Cape we could not contemplate any military action on the mainland at or near the Straits. The Rock of Gibraltar will stand a long siege but what is the good of that if we cannot use the harbour or pass the Straits? Once in Morocco the Germans will work South, and U-boats and aircraft will soon be operating from Casablanca and Dakar. I need not, Mr. President, enlarge upon the trouble this will cause to us or approach of trouble to the Western Hemisphere. We must gain as much time as possible.

JR

GRAY

London

Dated November 16, 1940

Rec'd 4:05 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

TRIPLE PRIORITY.

3771, November 16, 9 p.m.

PERSONAL AND **SECRET** FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM FORMER  
NAVAL PERSON.

"I am deeply obliged to you for the promptness of your action about the two big French ships. I am sure you will have been pleased about Taranto. The three uninjured Italian battleships have quitted Taranto today, which perhaps means they are withdrawing to Trieste. I am writing you a very long letter on the outlook for 1941; which Lord Lethian will give you in a few days. I hope you get my personal telegram of congratulation."

JOHNSON

CSB

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

*West Britain*  
✓

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

November 11, 1940

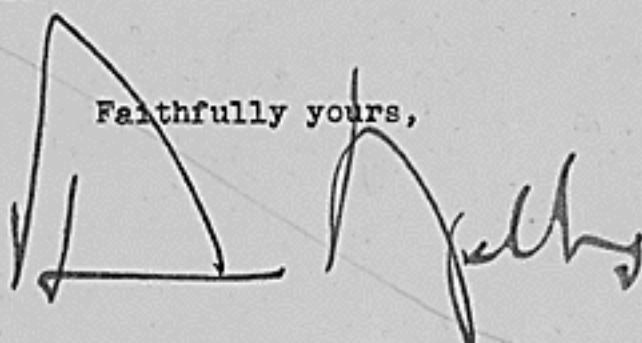
My dear Mr. President:

The British Chargé d'Affaires left with me this morning the attached letter addressed to you. This letter contains the text of the message addressed to you by Mr. Churchill also contained in the telegram received from the American Embassy in London last night.

An instruction is being sent by telegraph to the American Chargé d'Affaires in Vichy indicating the direct interest of this Government in the reported transfer of these French men of war. A copy of this telegram will be transmitted to you as soon as it is despatched, together with a suggested reply for you to send to Mr. Churchill.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,



Enclosure.

The President,  
The White House.



BRITISH EMBASSY,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

November 11th, 1940.

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein the text  
of a message from the Prime Minister  
which I have been instructed by telegram  
received from London last night to  
communicate to you.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

*Harold Butler*

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,

Washington, D. C.

Message from the Prime Minister to the President  
received from London on the evening of November 10th

We have been much disturbed by reports of intention of French Government to bring the "Jean Bart" and the "Richelieu" to the Mediterranean for completion. It is difficult to exaggerate the potential danger if this were to happen, and so open the way for these ships to fall under German control. We should feel bound to do our best to prevent it.

We conveyed a warning to the French Government through the Ambassador in Madrid a few days ago on the following lines:-

Such a step would greatly increase the temptation to the Germans and the Italians to seize the French Fleet. We doubt not the good faith of the French Government, but their physical ability to implement their assurances that they will not let the Fleet fall into the enemy's hand. We particularly wish to avoid any clash between British and French naval forces and therefore hope that if they had thought of moving the ships they will now refrain from doing so.

As we said to the French Government, we should not question the good faith of their assurances, but even if we accept them we can feel

no/

no security that they will in fact be able to maintain them once the ships are in French ports in the power or reach of the enemy, and I confess that the desire of the French Government to bring these ships back, if this turns out to be well founded, seems to me to give cause for some suspicion.

It would be most helpful if you felt able to give a further warning at Vichy on this matter, for if things went wrong it might well prove an extreme danger for us both.





Yf

Great Britain  
Folder

10, Downing Street,  
Whitehall.

November 1940.

My dear Mr. President,

This is to introduce to you my friend, Sir Walter Citrine. He worked with me three years before the war in our effort to arouse all parties in the country to the need of rearmament against Germany. At the present time he fills a position in the Labour movement more important to the conduct of the war than many Ministerial offices. As he is a Member of the Privy Council, you can count in every way upon his responsibility and discretion. He has the root of the matter in him, and I most cordially commend him to your consideration.

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

Winston Churchill

10, Downing Street,  
Washington.

Favoured by Sir Walter Citrine.

The President of the United States  
of America.

~~TOP SECRET~~

London,  
October 27, 1940.

To: Purvis

From: Salter

Please request Mr. Morgenthau to convey the following message to the President from former naval person:

"We have not yet heard what Vichy has agreed to.

If, however, they have betrayed warships and African and other Colonial harbours to Hitler, our already heavy task will be grievously aggravated. If Oran and Bizerta become German-Italian submarine bases, our hopes of stopping or impeding the reinforcement of the hostile army now attacking Egypt will be destroyed, and the heaviest form of German-organized Italian attack must be expected. The situation in the Western Mediterranean will also be gravely worsened. If Dakar is betrayed, very great dangers will arise in the Atlantic unless we are able to rectify the position, which will not be easy.

On the other hand, the announcement of Vichy's terms may lead to much desired revolt in the French Empire, which we should have to aid and foster with further drains upon our slowly expanding resources.

Either way, therefore, immense exertions will be required from us in the Mediterranean during the next year.

We are endeavouring to assemble a very large army in the Middle East, and the movement of troops thither from all parts of the Empire, especially from the Mother country, has for some months past been unceasing. The campaign which will develop there certainly in the new year, and which may involve Turkey and Greece, makes demands upon our shipping and munitions output and resources which are enormous and beyond our power without your help to supply to a degree which would ensure victory.

All the time we have to provide for the defence of the island against invasion which is fully mounted and for which sixty of the best German divisions and superior Air Forces stand ready.

Lastly the U-boat and air attacks upon our only remaining life line, the northwestern approach, will be repelled only by the strongest concentration of our flotillas.

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED



You will see, therefore, Mr. President, how very great are our problems and dangers. We feel, however, confident of our ability, if we are given the necessary supplies, to carry on the war to a successful conclusion, and anyhow we are going to try our best.

You will, however, allow me to impress upon you the extreme urgency of accelerating delivery of the programme of aircraft and other munitions which has already been laid before you by Layton and Purvis. So far as aircraft is concerned, would it be possible to speed up deliveries of existing orders so that the numbers coming to our support next year will be considerably increased? Furthermore can new orders for expanded programme also be placed so promptly that deliveries may come out in the middle of 1941?

The equipment of our armies, both for home defence and overseas, is progressing, but we depend upon American deliveries to complete our existing programme which will certainly be delayed and impeded by the bombing of factories and disturbances of work.

A memorandum on the technical details is being furnished you through the proper channels, and having placed all the facts before you I feel confident that everything humanly possible will be done. The world cause is in your hands."

-----

11

Message from Mr. Winston Churchill  
to the President, dated October 25th, 1940.

---

Our Chargé d'Affaires will have told you about the telegrams which we have received from and sent to Sir Samuel Hoare in Madrid and of the views of the French Ambassador there. There seems to be a desperate struggle going on between Petain and Laval. If the French fleet and French bases on the African shore are betrayed to Germany our task will become vastly more difficult and your dangers will grow. I have a feeling that things are hanging in the balance at Vichy. The King is sending a personal message to Marshal Petain appealing to his soldierly honour. Would it not be possible for you, Mr. President, to send a message to him yourself? It would greatly strengthen his position and might make him choose rightly. Anyhow there is no time to be lost as a very disastrous turn may be very easily given to the war by the Vichy Government committing another act of shame.

On October 19th the Prime Minister sent a telegram to His Majesty's Ambassador at Madrid expressing the hope that he would be able to convey to the French Government through the French Ambassador in Madrid two root ideas. Firstly, His Majesty's Government would let bygones be bygones and would work with anyone who convinced them of his resolution to defeat the common foes. In the second place as the British people were fighting for their lives as well as for a victory which will simultaneously relieve all captive States, they would stop at nothing.

Sir Samuel Hoare was instructed to try to make the Vichy Government feel what everyone in London took for certain - i.e. that Great Britain had got Hitler beaten and that although he might ravage continually and the war might last a long time, his doom was certain. The Prime Minister's message went on to say that it passed his comprehension why no French leaders seceded to Africa where they would have an empire and the command of the seas. If this had been done at the beginning Italy might well have been knocked out by now. Surely the opportunity was the most splendid ever offered to daring men. Sir Samuel Hoare was instructed to do his best to convey these ideas to the Vichy Government even though precise responses to such suggestions could hardly be expected.

A telegram has been received in reply from Sir Samuel Hoare stating that on October 24th he was informed by the French Ambassador that this

message/



message from the Prime Minister was likely to have a great effect on the French Government. M. Laval and Admiral Darlan were pressing hard for an agreement with the Germans over the transfer of the French fleet and bases while Marshal Petain and General Weygand were resisting.

The French Ambassador had suggested that a similar message from the Prime Minister to M. Petain, possibly in the name of The King, might turn the scales in Great Britain's favour and prove a damning document against M. Laval if it were published. Such a message should refer to Marshal Petain's loyalty to his signature of the Armistice and make it clear that the present German demands went far beyond the terms of the Armistice. The message should end with a personal appeal to M. Petain to repudiate such dishonourable terms.

Later in the evening of October 24th the French Ambassador again urged the immediate despatch of such a message to Marshal Petain. Sir Samuel Hoare enquired whether he could be authorised to inform his French colleague by mid-day October 25th that such a message would be forthcoming. He thought that if this were done the French Ambassador might be able to hold up negotiations in Paris and forestall M. Laval.

In reply Sir Samuel Hoare has been told that the message will be sent. Arrangements are being made to send it simultaneously via Madrid and direct to Vichy through the United States Embassy in London.

October 25th, 1940

Pres.

Conf file - do not return Kennedy 4

~~EH~~

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

GRAY

London

Dated October 21, 1940

Rec'd 11:25 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

TRIPLE PRIORITY

3482, October 21, 4 p.m.

**SECRET** AND PERSONAL FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM FORMER  
NAVAL PERSON:

"We hear rumors from various sources that the Vichy Government are preparing their ships and colonial troops to aid the Germans against us. I do not myself believe these reports, but if the French fleet at Toulon were turned over to Germany it would be a very heavy blow. It would certainly be a wise precaution, Mr. President, if you would speak in the strongest terms to the French Ambassador emphasizing the disapprobation with which the United States would view such a betrayal of the cause of democracy and freedom. They will pay great heed in Vichy to such a warning.

You will have seen what very heavy losses we have suffered in the northwestern approaches to our last two convoys.

EH -2- 3482, October 21, 4 p.m. from London.

convoys. This is due to our shortage of destroyers in the gap period I mentioned to you. Thank God your 50 are now coming along, and some will soon be in action. We ought to be much better off by the end of the year, as we have a lot of our own anti-U-boat vessels completing, but naturally we are passing through an anxious and critical period with so little small craft having to guard against invasion in the narrow waters, with the very great naval effort we are making in the Mediterranean, and the immense amount of convoy work".

KENNEDY

KLP



JT

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

TRIPLE PRIORITY.

3325, October 4, 9 p.m.

**SECRET** AND PERSONAL FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM  
FORMER NAVAL PERSON.

"After prolonged consideration of all the issues involved we today decided to let the Burma Road be re-opened when the three months period expired on October 17. Foreign Secretary and I will announce this to Parliament on Tuesday 8th. I shall say that our hopes for a just settlement being reached Japan and China have not borne fruit and that the Three Power Pact revives the Anti-Comintern Pact of 1939 and that it has a clear pointer against the United States. I know how difficult it is for you to say anything which would commit the United States to any hypothetical course of action in the Pacific. But I venture to ask whether at this time a simple action might not speak louder than words. Would it not be possible for you to send an American squadron, the bigger the

GRAY

LONDON

Dated October 4, 1940

Rec'd 8:11 p.m.

*File in desk drawer*

-2- 3325, October 4, 9 p.m., from London

the better, to pay a friendly visit to Singapore. There they would be welcome in a perfectly normal and rightful way. If desired occasion might be taken of such a visit for a technical discussion of naval and military problems in those and Philippine waters and the Dutch might be invited to join. Anything in this direction would have a marked deterrent effect upon a Japanese declaration of war upon us over the Burma Road opening. I should be very grateful if you would consider action along these lines as it might play an important part in preventing the spreading of the war.

In spite of the Dakar fiasco the Vichy Government is endeavoring to enter into relations with us which shows how the tides are flowing in France now that they feel the German weight and see we are able to hold our own.

Although our position in the air is growing steadily stronger both actually and relatively our need for aircraft is urgent. Several important factories have been seriously injured and the rate of production is hampered by air alarms. On the other hand our losses in pilots have been less than we expected because in fighting over our own soil a very large proportion get down safely or only wounded. When your officers were over here we

WERE

-3- No. 3325, October 4, 9 p.m., from London

were talking in terms of pilots. We are now beginning to think that airplanes will be the limiting factor so far as the immediate future is concerned.

I cannot feel that the invasion danger is passed. The gent has taken off his clothes and put on his bathing suit but the water is getting colder and there is an autumn nip in the air. We are maintaining the utmost vigilance."

KENNEDY

NPL



file

~~SECRET~~

Telegram from London dated  
September 24th, 1940

I was encouraged by your reception of information conveyed by Lord Lothian about Dakar. It would be against our joint interests if strong German submarine and aircraft base were established there. It looks as if there might be a stiff fight. Perhaps not but anyhow orders have been given to ram it through. We should be delighted if you would send some American warships to Monrovia, Freetown, and I hope by that time to have Dakar ready for your call. But what really matters now is that you should put it across the French Government that a war declaration would be very bad indeed for them in all that concerns United States. If Vichy declare war that is same thing as Germany, and Vichy possessions in Western Hemisphere must be considered potentially German possessions. Many thanks also for your hint about invasion. We are all ready for them. I am very glad to hear about rifles.

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

COPY

SECRET

Telegram from London dated  
September 24, 1940

*(Naval Person)*

I was encouraged by your reception of information conveyed by Lord Lothian about Dakar. It would be against our joint interests if strong German submarine and aircraft base were established there. It looks as if there might be a stiff fight. Perhaps not but anyhow orders have been given to ram it through. We should be delighted if you would send some American warships to Monrovia, Freetown, and I hope by that time to have Dakar ready for your call. But what really matters now is that you should put it across the French Government that a war declaration would be very bad indeed for them in all that concerns United States. If Vichy declare war that is one thing as Germany, and Vichy possessions in Western Hemisphere must be considered potentially German Possessions. Many thanks also for your hint about invasion. We are all ready for them. I am very glad to hear about rifles.

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

*For original of this message -  
See Great Britain - Drawer 4-1940.*

London - British lease naval bases to U. S.

JR

GRAY

London

Dated August 27, 1940

Rec'd 10:15 a.m.

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

TRIPLE PRIORITY.

2912, August 27, 3 p.m.

**SECRET** AND PERSONAL FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM FORMER  
NAVAL PERSON.

"Lord Lothian has cabled me the outline of the facilities you have in mind. Our naval and air experts studying the question from your point of view had reached practically the same conclusions except that in addition they thought Antigua might be useful as a base for flying boats. To this also you would be very welcome. Our settled policy is to make the United States safe on their Atlantic seaboard beyond a peradventure to quote a phrase you may remember.

We are quite ready to make you a positive offer on these lines forthwith. There would of course have to be an immediate conference on details but for the reasons which I set out in my last telegram we do not like the idea of an arbiter should any difference arise because we feel that as donors we must remain the final judges of what the gift is to consist of / <sup>within</sup> the general framework of the facilities



-2- #2912, August 27, 3 p.m., from London.

facilities which will have been promised and always on the understanding that we shall do our best to meet United States wishes.

The two letters drafted by Lord Lothian to the Secretary of State are quite agreeable to us. The only reason why I do not wish the second letter to be published is that I think it is much more likely that the German Government will be the one to surrender or scuttle its fleet or what is left of it. In this as you are aware they have already had some practice. (END SECTION ONE)

KENNEDY

RR

HSM

GRAY

London

Dated August 27, 1940

Rec'd 10:50 a. m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

TRIPLE PRIORITY

2912, August 27, 3 p. m. (SECTION TWO)

You will remember that I said some months ago in one of my private cables to you that any such action on our part would be a dastard act and that in the opinion of everyone of us.

If you felt able after our offer had been made to let us have the instrumentalities which have been mentioned or anything else you think proper this could be expressed as an act not in payment or consideration for but in recognition of what we had done for the security of the United States.

Mr. President, this business has become especially urgent in view of the recent menace which Mussolini is showing to Greece. If our business is put through on big lines and in the highest spirit of good will it might even now save that small historic country from invasion and conquest. Even the next forty-eight hours are important."

(END MESSAGE)

KENNEDY

RR

SECRET

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

August 27th, 1940

Dear Mr. President,

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Here is the Prime Minister's reply together with the drafts of the letters I am to write to Mr. Hull, approved by London. I think you will agree that they meet all essential points so far as our side of the transaction is concerned.

I should very much like to know whether you are satisfied before you leave Washington to-day. General Watson tells me you have got a terrible lot of engagements for the rest of the day so perhaps you could get him to give me your answer over the telephone.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Yours very sincerely,



The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,  
President.

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED



Following from former naval person for President.

"Lord Lothian has cabled me outline of facilities you have in mind (~~Gr. corrupt~~) (~~suggestion~~). Our naval and air experts studying question from your point of view had reached practically the same conclusions except that in addition they thought that Antigua might be useful as a base for flying boats. To this also you would be very welcome. Our settled policy is to make the United States safe on their Atlantic Seaboard beyond a peradventure to quote a phrase you may remember.

2. We are quite ready to make you a positive offer on these lines forthwith. There would of course have to be an immediate conference on details but for reasons which I set out in my last telegram we do not like the idea of an arbiter should any difference arise because we feel that as donor we must remain the final judges of what the gift is to consist of within the general framework of the facilities which will have been promised and always on the understanding that we shall do our best to meet the United States wishes.

3. The two letters drafted by Lord Lothian to the Secretary of State are quite agreeable to us. The only reason why I do not wish the second letter to be published is that I think that it is much more likely that German Government will be one to surrender or scuttle its fleet or what is left of it. In this as you are aware they have already had some practice. You will remember that I said some months ago in one of my private cables to you that any such action on our part would be a dastardly act and that is the opinion of everyone of us.

4. If/

4. If you felt able after our offer had been made to let us have instrumentalities which have been mentioned, or anything else you think proper, this could be expressed as an act not in payment or consideration for but in recognition of what we had done for the security of the United States.

5. Mr. President this business has become especially urgent in view of recent menace which Mussolini is showing to Greece. If our business is put through on bilateral lines and in the highest spirit of good-will it might even now save that small historic country from invasion and conquest. Even the next forty-eight hours are important."

Draft letter from H.M.Ambassador to Secretary of State  
of the United States.

Sir,

I have the honour under instructions from His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to refer to the speech made by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on August 20th. In that speech Mr. Churchill stated that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom had decided some months ago that the interests of both the United States and the British Commonwealth of Nations required that the United States should have facilities for the naval and air defence of the western hemisphere against the attack of a hostile power which might have acquired temporary but lengthy control of a large part of western Europe and its resources.

I have now been instructed to inform you that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, in agreement with His Majesty's Government in Canada, are happy to give the assurance that in the hope of furthering and making still more cordial and enduring the existing good relations between Great Britain and the United States, and as a free contribution on their part towards the defence of the Americas, and the inhabitants thereof, they are ready to make available immediately to the United States Government naval and air facilities in certain areas in Newfoundland, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Antigua, St. Lucia, Trinidad, and British Guiana, needed for the purpose of hemispheric defence, such areas to be leased to the United States Government for a period of 99 years.

In order to give further precision to this offer I am authorised to state that His Majesty's Government are ~~be~~ prepared in friendship and good will to meet ~~xxxx~~ <sup>of the U.S.A.</sup> representatives/forthwith in order to consider the terms

of/



of the aforementioned leases and that subject to later settlement of points of detail the facilities which they are prepared to offer at the above-mentioned places are:-

- (a) facilities to develop naval and air establishments together with the necessary seaward, coast and anti-aircraft defences.
- (b) Provision for location of sufficient military garrisons.
- (c) Facilities for accommodating these garrisons, together with stores, etc.
- (d) Such measures of jurisdiction and of local administrative control in each of the areas as may be determined by mutual agreement to be necessary in order to give effect to the objects of the lease and for security and effective exercise by the United States Government of all the above facilities.

His Majesty's Government do not desire rent or any other payment in return for the grant of these facilities or in consideration of the leases, though they presume that the Government of the United States will be willing to pay compensation to private interests for eviction or disturbance.

---

Draft letter from H.M.Ambassador to the Secretary of  
State of the United States.

Not for publication.

Dear Mr. Secretary,

I am writing with reference to my note of to-day regarding my Government's offer of certain naval and air facilities to the United States Government to inform you that I have been authorised in this connexion to draw your attention to and to confirm on behalf of the Prime Minister certain statements made by him in the House of Commons on June 4th and August 20th.

On June 4th Mr. Churchill said:

"We shall never surrender and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this land or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, will carry on the struggle until in God's good time the New World, with all its power and might, sets forth to the liberation and rescue of the Old."

On August 20th Mr. Churchill said:

"In our own case, if we had been put in the terrible position of France - now happily impossible, although it would have been the duty of all war leaders to fight on here to the end - it would also have been their duty, as I indicated in my speech of June 4th, to provide as far as possible for the naval security of Canada and our Dominions and to make sure they had the means to carry on the struggle from beyond the oceans."

---



PERSONAL AND ~~SECRET~~

I fully understand legal and constitutional difficulties which make you wish for a contract, embodied in letters, but I venture to put before you the difficulties and even dangers which I foresee in this procedure.

For the sake of precise ~~list~~ instrumentalities mentioned, which in our sore need we greatly desire, we are asked to pay undefined concessions in all islands and places mentioned from Newfoundland to British Guiana "as may be required in the judgement of the United States". Suppose that we could not agree to all your experts asked for, should we not be exposed to a charge of breaking our contract, for which we had already received value. Your ~~commitment~~ <sup>commitment</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~essence~~ <sup>essence</sup> is definitely ~~ours~~ <sup>ours</sup> ~~unlimited~~ <sup>unlimited</sup>. Much though we need destroyers, we should not wish to have them at the risk of a misunderstanding with the United States, or indeed any serious argument. If the matter is to be represented as a contract both sides must be defined with far more precision on our side than has hitherto been possible. But this might easily take some time. As I have several times pointed out, we need destroyers chiefly to bridge the gap between now and the arrival of our new construction, which I set on foot on the outbreak of the war. This construction is very considerable. For instance, we shall receive by the end of February new destroyers and new medium destroyers 20. Corvettes, which are a handy type of submarine-hunter, adapted to ocean work 60. Motor torpedo boats 37. M.A.S. Boats 25.

Fairmiles/

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED



Fairmiles, a wooden anti-submarine patrol boat 104. 72 ft. motor launches 29. An even greater in-flow will arrive in the following 6 months. It is just in the gap from September to February inclusive, while this new crop is coming in and working up that your fifty destroyers would be invaluable. With them we could minimize the shipping losses in North Western approaches, and also take a stronger line against Mussolini in the Mediterranean. Therefore time is all-important. We should not, however, be justified in the circumstances if we gave a blank cheque on the whole of our trans-Atlantic possessions merely to bridge this gap, through which anyhow we hope to make our way though with added risk and suffering. This I am sure you will see puts forth our [?] difficulties] plainly.

2. Would not following procedure be acceptable?

I would offer at once certain fairly well-defined facilities which will show you the kind of gift we have in mind and your experts could then discuss these or any variants of them with ours, we remaining the final judge of what we can give. All this we will do free trusting entirely to the generosity and goodwill of the American people as to whether they on their part would like to do something for us. But anyhow it is the settled policy of His Majesty's Government to offer you and make available to you when desired solid and effective means of protecting your Atlantic seaboard. I have already asked the Admiralty and Air Ministry to draw up in outline what we are prepared to offer leaving your experts to suggest alternatives. I propose to send you this outline in two or three days and to publish

in/

in due course. In this way there can be no possible dispute and the American people will feel more warmly towards us because they will see that we are playing the game by the world's cause and that their safety and interests are dear to us.

3. If your law or your Admiral require that any help you may choose to give us must be presented as a quid pro quo, I do not see why the British Government have to come into that at all.

Could you not say that you did not feel able to accept this fine offer which we make unless the United States matched it in some way and that therefore Admiral would be able to link the one with the other.

I am so very grateful to you for all the trouble you have been taking and I am so sorry to add to your burden knowing what a good [?] friend] you have been to us.

August 25th, 1940

1-5-4  
EN

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

GRAY

LONDON

Dated August 15, 1940

Rec'd 8:44 p.m., 14th

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

TRIPLE PRIORITY

2730, August 15, 1 a.m.

Your 2316, August 13, 6 p.m.

**SECRET** AND PERSONAL FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM FORMER  
NAVAL PERSON.

"I need not tell you how cheered I am by your message or how grateful I feel for your untiring efforts to give us all possible help. You will, I am sure, send us everything you can, for you know well that the worth of every destroyer that you can spare to us is measured in rubies. But we also need the motor torpedo boats which you mentioned and as many flying boats and rifles as you can let us have. We have a million men waiting for rifles.

The moral value of this fresh aid from your government and people at this critical time will be very great and widely felt.

We can meet both the points you consider necessary to help you with Congress and with others concerned, but I

am sure



-2- #2730, August 15, 1 a.m., from London.

am sure that you will not misunderstand me if I say that our willingness to do so must be conditional on our being assured that there will be no delay in letting us have the ships and flying boats. As regards an assurance about the British fleet, I am of course, ready to reiterate to you what I told Parliament on June 4th. We intend to fight this out here to the end and none of us would ever buy peace by surrendering or scuttling the fleet. But in any use you may make of this repeated assurance you will please bear in mind the disastrous effect from our point of view and perhaps also from yours of allowing any impression to grow that we regard the conquest of the British Islands and its naval bases as any other than an impossible contingency. The spirit of our people is splendid. Never have they been so determined. Their confidence in the issue has been enormously and legitimately strengthened by the severe air fighting of the past week.

As regards naval and air bases, I readily agree to your proposals for 99 year leases which is easier for us than the method of purchase. I have no doubt that, once the principle is agreed between us, the details can be adjusted and we can discuss them at leisure. It will be necessary for us to consult the governments of Newfoundland and Canada about the Newfoundland base in which

Canada

-3- #2730, August 15, 1 a.m., from London.

Canada has an interest. We are at once proceeding to seek their consent.

Once again, Mr. President, let me thank you for your help and encouragement which means so much to us.

KENNEDY

NPL

1  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

From:

*London*

Number:

*2490*

Dated:

*7-31-6pm*

Code:

*Gray*

Caption:

*Secret and personal  
for the President*

This telegram has been distributed to:

*5*

Please advise the Division of Communications and Records if further distribution should be made.



JT

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

GRAY

LONDON

Dated July 31, 1940

Rec'd 3:35 p.m.

TRIPLE PRIORITY

2490, July 31, 6 p.m.

**STRICTLY SECRET** AND PERSONAL FOR THE PRESIDENT  
FROM FORMER NAVAL PERSON:

"It is some time since I ventured to cable personally to you, and many things both good and bad have happened in between. It has now become most urgent for you to let us have the destroyers, motor boats and flying-boats for which we have asked. The Germans have the whole French coast line from which to launch U-boats, dive-bomber attacks upon our trade and food, and in addition we must be constantly prepared to repel by sea action threatened invasion in the narrow waters, and also to deal with break outs from Norway towards Ireland, Iceland, Shetlands and Faroes. Besides this we have to keep control of the exit from the Mediterranean, and if possible the command of that inland sea itself, and thus to prevent the war spreading seriously into Africa.

(END SECTION ONE)

WSB

KENNEDY

JT

GRAY

LONDON

Dated July 31, 1940

Rec'd 6:30 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

TRIPLE PRIORITY.

2490, July 31, 6 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

Point two. We have a large construction of destroyers and anti-U-boat craft coming forward, but the next three or four months open the gap of which I have previously told you. Latterly, the air attack on our shores has become injurious. In the last ten days we have had the following destroyers sunk: BRAZEN, CODRINGTON, DELIGHT, WREN, and the following damaged: BEAGLE, BOREAS, BRILLIANT, GRIFFIN, MONTROSE, WALPOLE, WHITSHED, TOTAL 11. All this in the advent of any attempt which may be made at invasion. Destroyers are frightfully vulnerable to air bombing, and yet they must be held in the air bombing area to prevent seaborne invasion. We could not keep up the present rate of casualties for long, and if we cannot get a substantial reinforcement, the whole fate of the war may be decided by this minor and easily remediable factor.

This

-2- No. 2490, July 31, 6 p.m. (SEC TWO) from London

This is a frank account of our present situation and I am confident, now that you know exactly how we stand, that you will leave nothing undone to ensure that 50 or 60 of your oldest destroyers are sent to me at once. I can fit them very quickly with asdic and use them against U-boats on the western approaches and so keep the more modern and better gunned craft for the narrow seas against invasion.

Mr. President, with great respect I must tell you that in the long history of the world, this is a thing to do now. Large construction is coming to me in 1941, but the crisis will be reached long before 1941. I know you will do all in your power but I feel entitled and bound to put the gravity and urgency of the position before you.

Point three. If the destroyers were given, the motor boats and flying boats which would be invaluable, could surely come in behind them.

(END SECTION TWO)

KENNEDY

NK:LMS



JT

GRAY

LONDON

Dated July 31, 1940

Rec'd 6:37 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

TRIPLE PRIORITY.

2490, July 31, 6 p.m. (SECTION THREE)

Point four. I am beginning to feel very hopeful about this war if we can get 'round the next three or four months. The air is holding well. We are hitting that man<sup>hard</sup>, both in repelling attacks and in bombing Germany. But the loss of destroyers by air attacks may well be so serious as to break down our defense of the food and trade routes across the Atlantic.

Point five. Tonight the latest convoys of rifles, cannon and ammunition are coming in. Special trains are waiting to take them to the troops and home guard, who will take a lot of killing before they give them up. I am sure that with your comprehension of the sea affair, you will not let this crux of the battle go wrong for the want of these destroyers. I cabled to Lothian some days ago, and now send this through Kennedy, who is a grand help to us and the common cause."

(END OF MESSAGE)

KENNEDY

NK

REF/DEB  
UNCLASSIFIED

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

~~Secret~~

July 9th, 1940.

Dear Mr. President,

I enclose herein a copy of a telegram containing a message for you from the Prime Minister regarding the appointment of the Duke of Windsor as Governor of the Bahamas. You will see from this telegram that the Prime Minister was particularly anxious that you should have advance information of this appointment. Most unfortunately the telegram containing the Prime Minister's <sup>message</sup> ~~letter~~ reached this Embassy about midday in a corrupt form, and it was necessary to ask the Foreign Office for a repetition. Before this repetition was received another telegram was received from London stating that owing to/

The Honourable

Franklin D. Roosevelt,

President of the United States of America,  
Washington, D. C.

to an unfortunate leakage it had been necessary to arrange for the appointment to be announced this evening by the British Broadcasting Company.

I am afraid therefore that circumstances have made it impossible to give you the advance notice desired.

Believe me,

Dear Mr. President,

Very sincerely yours,

*L. Hurain*



The position of the Duke of Windsor on the Continent in recent months has been causing His Majesty and His Majesty's Government some embarrassment as, though his loyalties are unimpeachable, there is always a backwash of Nazi intrigue which seeks now that the greater part of the Continent is in enemy hands to make trouble about him. There are personal and family difficulties about his return to this country.

In all the circumstances it was felt that an appointment abroad might appeal to him and the Prime Minister has with His Majesty's cordial approval offered him the Governorship of the Bahamas. His Royal Highness has intimated that he will accept the appointment.

The Prime Minister wished the President to have the earliest possible advance information of this decision which has only just been arrived at.

Telegram of June 17th/1940

MOST IMMEDIATE

Your telegram 1011.

You will see (from) H. PETAIN's broadcast how fast things are moving.

2. In view of President's willingness as expressed in your telegram No. 1011 to act as we had suggested in regard to making transfer of French fleet to us a condition of his willingness to act if he had been approached I hope that he will put immediate pressure on the French Government in no circumstances to fail to send the fleet to British ports before armistice is concluded.

3. Petain has acted in complete disregard of our stipulation and we can have no confidence in further action that he may take unless he can be stiffened to act up to principal condition on which we gave our conditional assent.

Telegram of June 17th, 1940

MOST IMMEDIATE

My telegram No. 1148.

I am deeply sensible of the President's desire to help us. Please tell him that most effective thing he can do is to let us have destroyers immediately. Our need of them is vital and their addition to our fleet might be decisive. It is most important that not a day should be lost.



(1)  
June 16. 1.50 p.m.

You should tell the President that French Government have asked whether, in spite of Treaty forbidding a separate peace or armistice, His Majesty's Government will consent to their enquiring what terms of armistice Germany would offer France.

2. His Majesty's Government have replied as follows: "You should deliver following message which has been approved by the Cabinet to M. Renaud. Begins.

Our agreement forbidding separate negotiations, whether for Armistice or peace was made with French Republic and not with any particular French Administration or Statesman. It therefore involves honour of France. Nevertheless, provided, but only provided, that French fleet is sailed forthwith for British harbours pending negotiations, His Majesty's Government give their full consent to enquiry by French Government to ascertain terms of an armistice for France. His Majesty's Government being ardent to continue the war wholly exclude themselves from all part in above-mentioned enquiry for an armistice. Ends."

3. I trust that if the President is asked by the French Government to act as intermediary in this inquiry he will tell French Government that before doing so he must be assured that in accordance with British request French fleet has been moved to British ports and that he will if necessary also make it clear to German Government that a demand for surrender of French fleet will not be permitted by United States Government.

June 16 (16 Paris) 9.50

You should, in continuation of my message contained my telegram No. 368, inform Monsieur Reynaud as follows:-

We expect to be consulted as soon as any armistice terms are received. This is necessary not merely in virtue of treaty forbidding separate peace or armistice but also in view of the vital consequences of any armistice to ourselves, have regard especially to fact that British troops are fighting with French army.

You should also impress on French Government that in stipulating for removal of French fleet to British ports we have in mind French interests as well as our own and are convinced that it will strengthen the hands of French Government in any armistice discussions if they can show that French navy is out of reach of German forces.

As regards French Air Force we assume that every effort will be made to fly it to North Africa, unless indeed the French Government would prefer to send it to this country.

We count on French Government doing all they can both before and during any armistice discussions to extricate the Polish, Belgian and Czech troops at present in France and to bring pressure on them to proceed to North Africa. Arrangements are being made to receive Polish and Belgian Governments in this country.

(3)

June 16. 1.19 p.m.

After message was sent to Monsieur Reynaud in reply to his request for permission from us to make enquiry about armistice we received information from responsible French quarters that decision of French Government to continue the war might still be secured if we would subscribe immediately to a declaration for text of which see my telegram to Bordeaux.

This has been conveyed to Monsieur Reynaud and our earlier reply on armistice proposal has been suspended pending further consideration of position by French Government in the light of declaration contained in paragraph 2 of above.

If French Government decide to continue war on strength of this, armistice proposal and our reply to it will of course lapse. Alternatively if they decide to pursue armistice proposal declaration will not be proceeded with.

Please explain to President whole position and how situation would develop. We will continue to keep him informed.

Prime Minister is going over tonight to meet Reynaud tomorrow.



June 16 eve 9. pm.

At this most fateful moment in the history of the modern world, the Governments of the United Kingdom and French Republic make this declaration of indissoluble union and unyielding resolution in their common defense of justice and freedom, against subjection to a system which reduces mankind to a state of robots and slaves.

The two Governments declare that France and Great Britain shall no longer be two nations but one Franco-British Union.

The constitution of the Union will provide for joint organs of defence, foreign, financial and economic policies.

Every citizen of France will enjoy immediate citizenship of Great Britain, every British subject will become a citizen of France.

Both countries will share responsibility for repair of devastation of war, wherever it occurs in their territories, and resources of both shall be equal, and as one, applied to that purpose.

During the war there shall be a single war cabinet, and all the forces of Britain and France, whether on land, sea or in the air, will be placed under its direction. It will govern from wherever it best can. The two Parliaments will be formally associated. The nations of the British Empire are already forming new armies. France will keep her available forces in the field, on the sea, and in the air. The Union appeals to United States to fortify the economic resources of the Allies, and to bring her powerful material aid to the common cause.

The/

-2-

The Union will concentrate its whole energy against  
the power of the enemy no matter where the battle may be.

And thus we shall conquer.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*File*  
*Confidential*  
*Morganthau*

June 18, 1940.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE PRESIDENT

After reading this, unless we do something to give the English additional destroyers, it seems to me it is absolutely hopeless to expect them to keep going.

H. M., JR.



Received via Arthur Purvis  
June 18, 1940  
H.M.J.

Viscount Halifax

Lord Lothian

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

June 17th, 1940

" "

~~Most Secret~~

Following was handed to United States Ambassador by former naval person late on June 15th. Please inform Purvis.

Since beginning of the war Britain and France lost thirty-two destroyers with displacement of 47,380 tons, which were complete losses. Out of these twenty-five with displacement of 37,637 tons were lost since February 1st.

There is (? always) a large number of destroyers out of action for worst damages caused by enemy action and (defence service ?). From the outbreak of the war up to invasion approximately 30% of British destroyers in home waters were in this condition and since then percentage has greatly increased and for instance out of 133 destroyers in commission in home waters today only 68 are fit for service, which is lowest level since the war started. In 1918 some 433 were in service.

The critical situation which has arisen in land operations has unfortunately made less apparent the grave difficulties with which we are faced on the sea.

The seizure of the Channel ports by the enemy has provided him both with convenient bases and stepping-off ground for descents on the coast. This means that our East Coast and I presume ports will become much more open to attack and in consequence more (? shipping) will have to be concentrated on the West Coast ports. This will enable the enemy to concentrate their submarine attacks on this more limited area, the shipping lanes of which will have to carry a heavy concentration of shipping.

This alone is a serious enough problem at a time when we know that enemy intend to carry out bitter and concentrated attack on our trade routes but added to our difficulties is the fact that Italy's entry into the war has brought into the seas another one hundred submarines many of which may be added to those already in German U-Boat fleet which at a conservative estimate numbers fifty-five.

The change of strategical situation brought about by possession by the enemy of the whole coast of Europe from Norway to Channel has faced us with a prospective invasion which has more hopes of success than we had ever conceived possible. While we must concentrate our destroyers on protecting vital trade, we must also dispose our naval forces to meet this threat.

If this invasion does take place it will almost certainly be in the form of dispersed landings from a large number of small craft and only effective counter to such a move is to maintain numerous and effective destroyer patrols.

To meet this double threat we have only the 68 destroyers mentioned above. Only 10 small type new construction destroyers are due for completion in the next four months.

The position becomes still worse when we have to contemplate diverting further destroyer forces to the Mediterranean as we may be forced to do when the sea war there is intensified.

We are faced with the imminent collapse of French resistance and if this occurs successful defence of this Island will be only hope of averting collapse of civilisation as we define it.

We must ask therefore as a matter of life or death, to be reinforced with these destroyers. We will carry on the (? struggle) whatever the odds but it may well be beyond our resources unless we receive every reinforcement and particularly do we need this reinforcement on the sea.

JT

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

GRAY

LONDON

Dated June 15, 1940

Rec'd 7 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington,

TRIPLE PRIORITY  
1678, June 15, midnight.

**MOST SECRET** AND PERSONAL FOR THE PRESIDENT.

"10:45 p.m., 15th June, 1940.

President of the United States from former naval  
person.

Since sending you my message this afternoon I have  
heard that Monsieur Reynaud, in a telegram which he  
has just sent to you, has practically said that the  
decision of France to continue the war from overseas  
depends on your being able to assure the French Govern-  
ment that the United States of America will come into  
the war at a very early date.

When I sent you my message just now I did not know  
that Monsieur Reynaud had stated the dilemma in these  
terms, but I am afraid there is no getting away from  
the fact that this is the choice before us now.

Indeed, the British Ambassador in Bordeaux tells me  
that if your reply does not contain the assurance asked  
for,



-2- #1678, June 15, midnight, from London

for, the French will very quickly ask for an armistice, and I much doubt whether it will be possible in that event for us to keep the French fleet out of German hands.

When I speak of the United States entering the war I am, of course, not thinking in terms of an expeditionary force, which I know is out of the question. What I have in mind is the tremendous moral effect that such an American decision would produce not merely in France but also in all the democratic countries of the world and in the opposite sense of the German and Italian peoples."

KENNEDY

HPD

JT

GRAY

LONDON

Dated June 15, 1940

Rec'd 6:37 p.m.

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

RUSH

1677, June 15, 9 p.m.

**SECRET** AND PERSONAL FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM FORMER  
NAVAL PERSON: (SECTION ONE)

"I am grateful to you for your telegram and I have reported its operative passages to Reynaud to whom I had imparted a rather more sanguine view. He will I am sure, be disappointed at non-publication. I understand all your difficulties with American public opinion and Congress, but events are moving downward at a pace where they will pass beyond the control of American public opinion when at last it is ripened. Have you considered what offers Hitler may choose to make to France. He may say, 'surrender the fleet intact and I will leave you Alsace Lorraine', or alternatively 'if you do not give me your ships I will destroy your towns'. I am personally convinced that America will in the end go to all lengths but this moment is supremely critical

-2- #1677, June 15, 9 p.m., from London

critical for France. A declaration that the United States will, if necessary, enter the war might save France. Failing that in a few days French resistance may have crumbled and we shall be left alone.

Although the present government and I personally would never fail to send the fleet across the Atlantic if resistance was beaten down here, a point may be reached in the struggle where the present ministers no longer have control of affairs and when very easy terms could be obtained for the British islands by their becoming a vassal state of the Hitler empire. A pro-German government would certainly be called into being to make peace and might present to a shattered or a starving nation an almost irresistible case for entire submission to the Nazi will. The fate of the British fleet as I have already mentioned to you would be decisive on the future of the United States because if it were joined to the fleets of Japan, France, and Italy and the great resources of German industry, overwhelming sea power would be in Hitler's hands. He might, of course, use it with a merciful moderation. On the other hand he might not. This revolution in sea power might happen very quickly and certainly long before the United States would be able to prepare against it.

If



-3- #1677, June 15, 9 p.m., from London

If we go (down?) you may have a United States of Europe under the Nazi command far more numerous, far stronger, far better armed than the new.

I know well, Mr. President, that your eye will already have searched these depths but I feel I have the right to place on record the vital manner in which American interests are at <sup>(stake?)</sup> state in our battle and that of France.

I am sending you through Ambassador Kennedy a paper on destroyer strength prepared by the naval staff for your information. If we have to keep as we shall, the bulk of our destroyers on the east coast to guard against invasion, how shall we be able to cope with a German-Italian attack on the food and trade by which we live? The sender of the 35 destroyers as I have already described will bridge the gap until our new construction comes in at the end of the year. Here is a definite practical and possible decisive step which can be taken at once and I urge most earnestly that you will weigh my words."

(SECTION TWO). MOST SECRET: "Since beginning of war Britain and France have lost 32 destroyers with displacement of 47,380 tons which were complete losses. Out of these 25, with displacement of 37,637 tons, were  
lost

-4- #1677, June 15, 9 p.m., from London

lost since 1st February.

There is always a large number of destroyers out of action for repairs to damages caused by enemy action and hard service. From outbreak of war up to Norwegian invasion approximately 30% of British destroyers in home waters were in this condition but since then the percentage has greatly increased and for instance, out of 133 destroyers in commission in home waters today, only 68 are fit for service, which is lowest level since war started. In 1918 some 433 destroyers were in service.

The critical situation which has arisen in land operations has unfortunately made less apparent the grave difficulties with which we are faced on the sea.

The seizure of the channel ports by the enemy has provided him both with convenient bases and stepping off ground for descents on our coast. This means that our east coast and channel ports will become much more open to attack and in consequence more shipping will have to be concentrated on west coast ports. This will enable the enemy to concentrate their submarine attacks on this more limited area, the shipping lanes of which will have to carry the heavy concentration of shipping.

This

-5- #1677, June 15, 9 p.m., from London

This alone is a serious enough problem at a time when we know that the enemy intend to carry out the bitter and concentrated attack on our trade routes, but added to our difficulties is the fact that Italy's entry into the war has brought into the seas another 100 submarines many of which may be added to those already in the German U-boat fleet, which at a conservative estimate numbers 55.

The changed strategical situation brought about by the possession by the enemy of the whole coast of Europe from Norway to the channel has faced us with a prospect of invasion which has more hopes of success than we had ever conceived possible. While we must concentrate our destroyers on protecting the vital trade, we must also dispose our naval forces to meet this threat.

If this invasion does take place, it will almost certainly be in the form of dispersed landings from a large number of small craft and the only effective counter to such a move is to maintain numerous and effective destroyer patrols.

To meet this double threat we have only the 68 destroyers mentioned above. Only 10 small type new construction destroyers are due to complete in next four months.

The



-6- #1677, June 15, 9 p.m., from London

The position becomes still worse when we have to contemplate diverting further destroyer forces to the Mediterranean as we may be forced to do when the sea war there is intensified.

We are now faced with the imminent collapse of French resistance and if this occurs the successful defense of this island will be the only hope of averting the collapse of civilization as we define it.

We must <sup>(see)</sup> ~~ask~~ **ASK** ~~and permitted~~ therefore as a matter of life or death to be reinforced with these destroyers. We will carry out the struggle whatever the odds but it may well be beyond our resources unless we receive every reinforcement and particularly do we need this reinforcement on the sea."

KENNEDY

NPL

hsm

GRAY

London

Dated June 13, 1940

Rec'd 9:10 a. m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

RUSH

1628, June 13, noon.

My 1622, June 12, 9 p. m.

~~SECRET~~ AND PERSONAL FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM FORMER  
NAVAL PERSON JUST RECEIVED.

"French have sent for me again, which means that crisis has arrived. Am just off. Anything you can say or do to help them now may make a difference.

We are also worried about Ireland. An American squadron at Berehaven would do no end of good I am sure."

KENNEDY

RR

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

MA

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (D)

London

Dated June 12, 1940

Rec'd 7:45 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

RUSH TRIPLE PRIORITY.

1622, June 12, 9 p.m.

(GRAY) Prime Minister to President Roosevelt.

Following from former naval person.

PERSONAL AND **SECRET**

I spent last night and this morning at the French G Q G where the situation was explained to me in the gravest terms by Generals Weygand and Georges. You have no doubt received full particulars from Mr Bullitt. The practical point is what will happen when and if the French front breaks, Paris is taken and General Weygand reports formally to his Government that France can no longer continue what he calls 'coordinated war'. The aged Marshal Petain who was none too good in April and July 1918 is I fear ready to lend his name and prestige to a treaty of peace for France. Reynaud on the other hand is for fighting on and he has a young general de Gaulle who believes much can be done. Admiral Darlan declares he will send the French fleet to Canada, it would



MA -2- tel # 1622, June 12 from London

it would be disastrous if the two big modern ships fell into bad hands. It seems to me that there must be many elements in France who will wish to continue the struggle either in France or in the French colonies or in both. This, therefore, is the moment for you to strengthen Reynaud the utmost you can and try to tip the balance in favor of the best and longest possible French resistance. I venture to put this point before you although I know you must understand it as well as I do.

Of course I made it clear to the French that we shall continue whatever happened and that we thought Hitler could not win the war or the mastery of the world until he had disposed of us, which has not been found easy in the past and which perhaps will not be found easy now. I made it clear to the French that we had good hopes of victory and anyhow had no doubts whatever of what our duty was. If there is anything you can say publicly or privately to the French now is the time (END GRAY).

Before I left the Prime Minister he urged me strongly to present again his crying need for destroyers. They lost two more yesterday. With invasion threatened and the ytrade routes likely to be attacked with the help of Italian submarines he feels he is in a most precarious position

MA -3- tel # 1622, June 12, from London

position and believes he needs destroyers more than anything else including planes. Replacements and repairs are by no means filling the gap.

KENNEDY

WVC

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

MA  
This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased before  
being communicated to  
anyone. (D)

London

Dated June 12, 1940

Rec'd 7:45 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

RUSH TRIPLE PRIORITY.

1622, June 12, 9 p.m.

(GRAY) Prime Minister to President Roosevelt.

Following from former naval person.

PERSONAL AND **SECRET**

I spent last night and this morning at the French  
G Q G where the situation was explained to me in  
the gravest terms by Generals Weygand and Georges.  
You have no doubt received full particulars from Mr  
Bullitt. The practical point is what will happen  
when and if the French front breaks, Paris is taken and  
General Weygand reports formally to his Government that  
France can no longer continue what he calls 'coordinated  
war'. The aged Marshal Petain who was none too good  
in April and July 1918 is I fear ready to lend his name  
and prestige to a treaty of peace for France. Reynaud  
on the other hand is for fighting on and he has a young  
general de Gaulle who believes much can be done. Admiral  
Darlan declares he will send the French fleet to Canada,  
it would



MA -2- tel # 1622, June 12 from London

it would be disastrous if the two big modern ships fell into bad hands. It seems to me that there must be many elements in France who will wish to continue the struggle either in France or in the French colonies or in both. This, therefore, is the moment for you to strengthen Reynaud the utmost you can and try to tip the balance in favor of the best and longest possible French resistance. I venture to put this point before you although I know you must understand it as well as I do.

Of course I made it clear to the French that we shall continue whatever happened and that we thought Hitler could not win the war or the mastery of the world until he had disposed of us, which has not been found easy in the past and which perhaps will not be found easy now. I made it clear to the French that we had good hopes of victory and anyhow had no doubts whatever of what our duty was. If there is anything you can say publicly or privately to the French now is the time (END GRAY).

Before I left the Prime Minister he urged me strongly to present again his crying need for destroyers. They lost two more yesterday. With invasion threatened and the trade routes likely to be attacked with the help of Italian submarines he feels he is in a most precarious position

MA -3- tel # 1622, June 12, from London

position and believes he needs destroyers more than anything else including planes. Replacements and repairs are by no means filling the gap.

KENNEDY

WVC

COPY:EDH

HSM

FROM

Gray

London

Dated May 20, 1940

Rec'd 8:40 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

1271, May 20, 1 p.m.

**SECRET** AND PERSONAL FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM FORMER  
NAVAL PERSON:

"Lothian has reported his conversation with you. I understand your difficulties but I am very sorry about the destroyers. If they were here in six weeks they would play an invaluable part. The battle in France is full of danger to both sides. Though we have taken heavy toll of enemy in the air and are clawing down two or three to one of their planes, they have still a formidable numerical superiority. Our most vital need is therefore the delivery at the earliest possible date of the largest possible number of Curtiss P-40 fighters now in course of delivery to your army.

With regard to the closing part of your talk with Lothian, our intention is whatever happens to fight on to the end in this Island and, provided we can get the help

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**



hsm -2- No. 1271, May 20, 1 p.m., from London

help for which we ask, we hope to run them very close in the air battles in view of individual superiority. Members of the present administration would likely go down during this process should it result adversely, but in no conceivable circumstances will we consent to surrender. If members of the present administration were finished and others came in to parley amid the ruins, you must not be blind to the fact that the sole remaining bargaining counter with Germany would be the fleet, and if this country was left by the United States to its fate no one would have the right to blame those then responsible if they made the best terms they could for the surviving inhabitants. Excuse me, Mr. President, putting this nightmare bluntly. Evidently I could not answer for my successors who in utter despair and helplessness might well have to accommodate themselves to the German will. However there is happily no need at present to dwell upon such ideas. Once more thanking you for your good will."

KENNEDY

HPD

COPY:EDH

REGRADED  
~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

Gray

HSM

FROM

London

Dated May 20, 1940

Rec'd 8:40 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

1271, May 20, 1 p.m.

~~SECRET~~ AND PERSONAL FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM FORMER  
NAVAL PERSON:

"Lothian has reported his conversation with you. I understand your difficulties but I am very sorry about the destroyers. If they were here in six weeks they would play an invaluable part. The battle in France is full of danger to both sides. Though we have taken heavy toll of enemy in the air and are clawing down two or three to one of their planes, they have still a formidable numerical superiority. Our most vital need is therefore the delivery at the earliest possible date of the largest possible number of Curtiss P-40 fighters now in course of delivery to your army.

With regard to the closing part of your talk with Lothian, our intention is whatever happens to fight on to the end in this Island and, provided we can get the help

hsm -2- No. 1271, May 20, 1 p.m., from London

help for which we ask, we hope to run them very close in the air battles in view of individual superiority. Members of the present administration would likely go down during this process should it result adversely, but in no conceivable circumstances will we consent to surrender. If members of the present administration were finished and others came in to parley amid the ruins, you must not be blind to the fact that the sole remaining bargaining counter with Germany would be the fleet, and if this country was left by the United States to its fate no one would have the right to blame those then responsible if they made the best terms they could for the surviving inhabitants. Excuse me, Mr. President, putting this nightmare bluntly. Evidently I could not answer for my successors who in utter despair and helplessness might well have to accommodate themselves to the German will. However there is happily no need at present to dwell upon such ideas. Once more thanking you for your good will."

KENNEDY

HPD

~~The original of this page is on display in the South Section of the main gallery on Panel 30 as of February 1971.~~

*Removed for pres. actions*



JT

GRAY

LONDON

Dated May 18, 1940

Rec'd 1:14 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

RUSH

1267, May 18, 6 p.m.

[REDACTED]  
Your 872, May 16 and my 1243, May 17, noon.

[REDACTED] AND PERSONAL FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM FORMER  
NAVAL PERSON.

"Many thanks for your message for which I am grateful. I do not need to tell you about the gravity of what has happened. We are determined to preserve to the very end whatever the result of the great battle raging in France may be. We must expect in any case to be attacked here on the Dutch model before very long and we hope to give a good account of ourselves. But if American assistance is to play any part it must be available."

KENNEDY

CSB

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

JR

*file*  
*Secret*  
GRAY

London

Dated May 15, 1940

Rec'd 12:55 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

RUSH.

1216, May 15, 6 p.m.

**SECRET** STRICTLY PERSONAL AND **CONFIDENTIAL** FOR THE  
PRESIDENT.

**TOP SECRET** AND PERSONAL. TELEGRAM. PRESIDENT  
ROOSEVELT FROM FORMER NAVAL PERSON.

Although I have changed my office, I am sure you would not wish me to discontinue our intimate, private correspondence. As you are no doubt aware, the scene has darkened swiftly. The enemy have a marked preponderance in the air, and their new technique is making a deep impression upon the French. I think myself the battle on land has only just begun, and I should like to see tanks engaged. Up to the present, Hitler is working with specialized units in tanks and air. The small countries are simply smashed up, one by one, like matchwood. We must expect, though it is not yet certain, that Mussolini will hurry in to share the loot of civilization. We expect to be attacked here ourselves

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

-2- #1216, May 15, 6 p.m., from London.

ourselves, both from the air and by parachute and air borne troops in the near future, and are getting ready for them. If necessary, we shall continue the war alone and we are not afraid of that. But I trust you realize, Mr. President, that the voice and force of the United States may count for nothing if they are withheld too long. You may have a completely subjugated, Nazified Europe established with astonishing swiftness, and the weight may be more than we can bear. All I ask now is that you should proclaim nonbelligerency, which would mean that you would help us with everything short of actually engaging armed forces. Immediate needs are: first of all, the loan of forty or fifty of your older destroyers to bridge the gap between what we have now and the large new construction we put in hand at the beginning of the war. This time next year we shall have plenty. But if in the interval Italy comes in against us with another one hundred submarines, we may be strained to breaking point. Secondly, we want several hundred of the latest types of aircraft, of which you are now getting delivery. These can be repaid by those now being constructed in the United States for us. Thirdly, anti-aircraft equipment and ammunition, of which again there will be plenty next year, if we are  
alive



-3- #1216, May 15, 6 p.m., from London.

alive to see it. Fourthly, the fact that our ore supply is being compromised from Sweden, from North Africa, and perhaps from northern Spain, makes it necessary to purchase steel in the United States. This also applies to other materials. We shall go on paying dollars for as long as we can, but I should like to feel reasonably sure that when we can pay no more, you will give us the stuff all the same. Fifthly, we have many reports of possible German parachute or air borne descents in Ireland. The visit of a United States squadron to Irish ports, which might well (\*) prolonged, would be invaluable. Sixthly, I am looking to you to keep that Japanese dog quiet in the Pacific, using Singapore in any way convenient. The details of the material which we have in mind will be communicated to you separately.

With all good wishes and respect."

KENNEDY

RR

(\*) Apparent omission.



May 7, 1940.

*My dear Mr. President,*

In view of the interest you displayed in the Battle of the River Plate, I thought you would like to see an advance copy of the official account of the Battle which we shall shortly be publishing.

*Yours sincerely*

*Winston Churchill*

The President of the United States.



# THE BATTLE OF THE RIVER PLATE

AN ACCOUNT OF EVENTS BEFORE,  
DURING AND AFTER THE ACTION  
UP TO THE SELF-DESTRUCTION OF  
THE ADMIRAL GRAF SPEE

Compiled in the Admiralty from despatches forwarded by  
Rear-Admiral Harwood and the Captains of H.M. Ships  
Ajax, Achilles and Exeter

*Crown Copyright Reserved*

LONDON

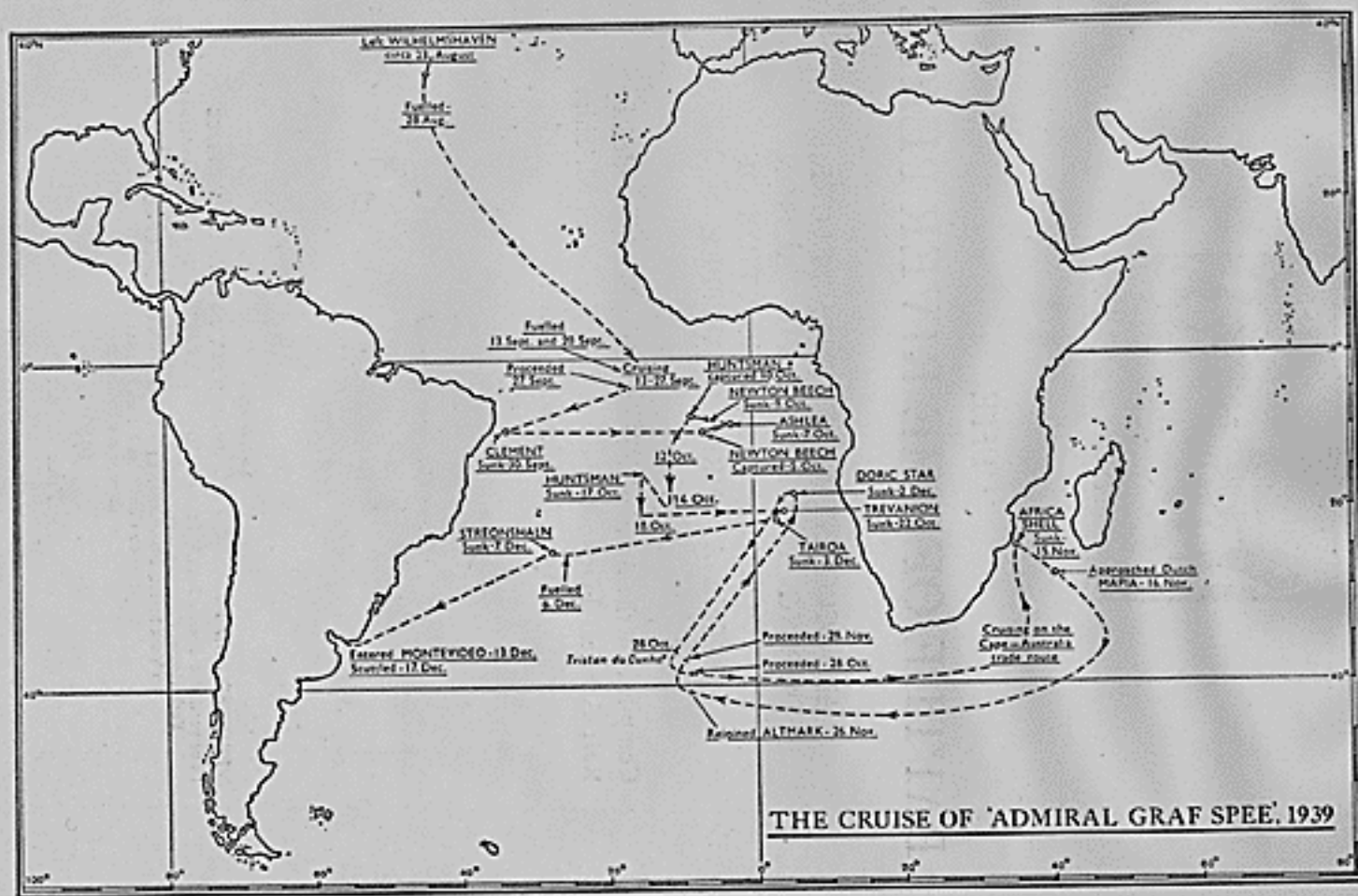
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE


To be purchased directly from H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses:  
York House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2; 120 George Street, Edinburgh 2;  
26 York Street, Manchester 1; 1 St. Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff;  
80 Chichester Street, Belfast;  
or through any bookseller

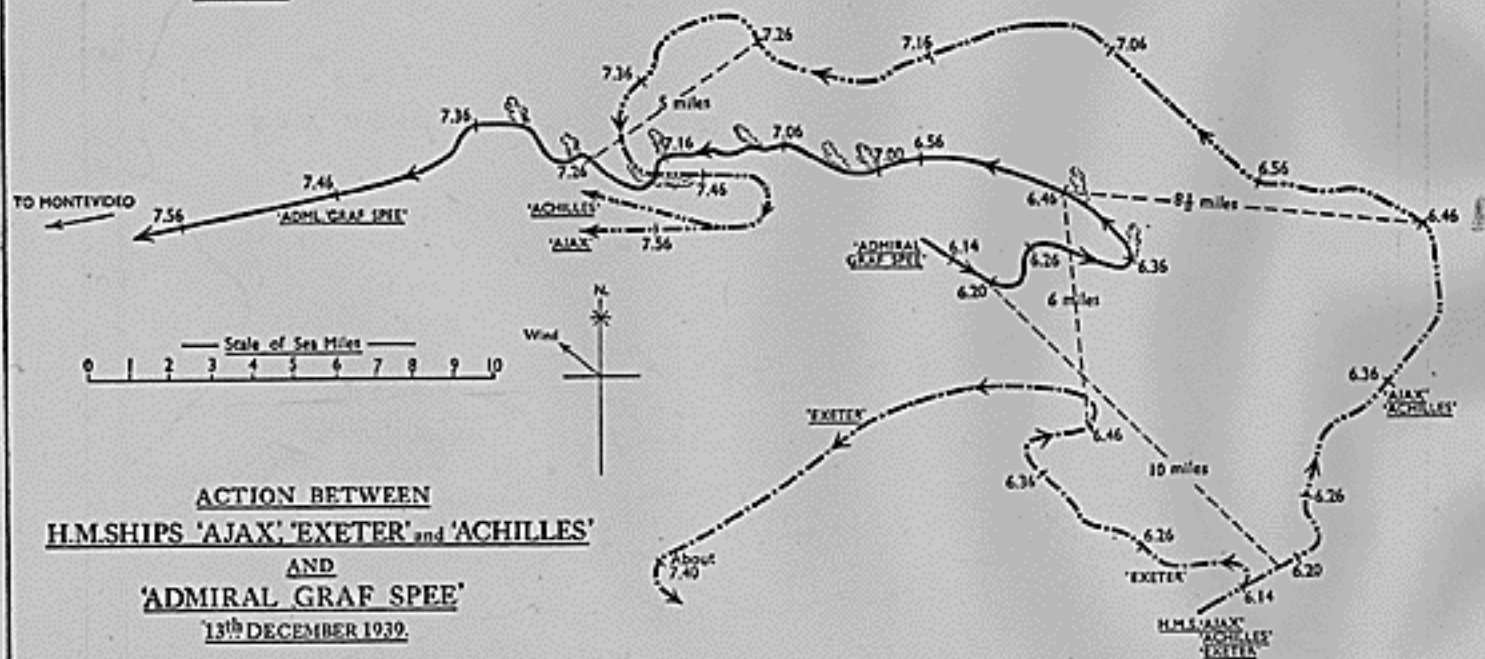
1940

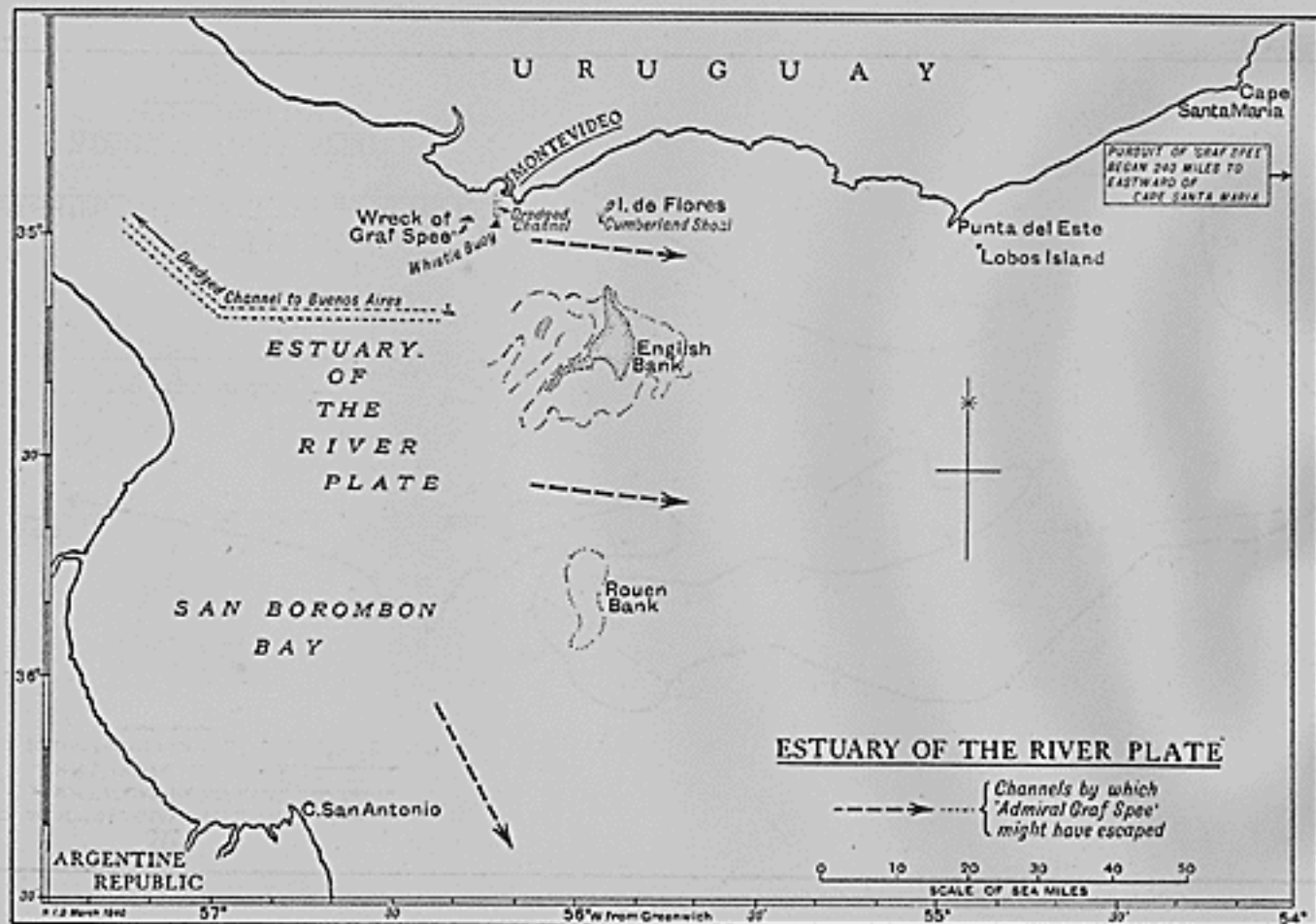
Price      net





KEY  
 TRACK OF 'ADMIRAL GRAF SPEE' .....  
 - - - H.M.S.'s 'AJAX' and 'ACHILLES' .....  
 - - - H.M.S. 'EXETER' .....  
 SMOKE SCREENS SHOWN THUS ..... 







## THE BATTLE OF THE RIVER PLATE.

"In this sombre dark winter . . . the brilliant action of the Plate . . . came like a flash of light and colour on the scene, carrying with it an encouragement to all who are fighting—to ourselves and to our allies."—First Lord of the Admiralty when welcoming H.M.S. *Exeter*, 15th February, 1940.

The action which led to the defeat and subsequent self-destruction of the German "pocket battleship" *Admiral Graf Spee* was made up of four distinct phases. First there were the preliminary movements which made the victory possible. Secondly there was the main battle. Thirdly there was the long shadowing action while the enemy was running for the safety of neutral territorial waters. Finally there was the long watch of the River Plate Estuary, with the *Admiral Graf Spee* hourly expected to make a dash for the open sea.

In the following account of the action, which has been compiled in the Admiralty from despatches forwarded by Rear-Admiral Harwood and the Captains of H.M. Ships *Ajax*, *Achilles* and *Exeter*, all the times given are the ships time kept by the Squadron. This was two hours slow on Greenwich Mean Time.

### THE FIRST PHASE.

It had been known since the S.S. *Clement* was sunk on September 30th that a German "pocket battleship" was at large in the South Atlantic Ocean, and the fact that four ships on the Gibraltar to South Africa route were overdue had indicated that this ship was raiding commerce on the eastern side of the South Atlantic. In mid-November, however, the sinking of the S.S. *Africa Shell* at the southern end of the Mozambique Channel proved that there was a German commerce raider in the southern part of the Indian Ocean. Whether this was the same raider as had been operating in the South Atlantic Ocean was not definitely known at that time. In any case, vigilance in the South Atlantic could not be relaxed.

Apart from the forces concerned in a systematic search of other areas, there were in the western part of the South Atlantic four cruisers of the South America Division under the command of Commodore H. H. Harwood. Early in December it had been necessary to detach H.M.S. *Cumberland*, the largest and most powerful of the force, to the Falkland Islands to carry out a self-refit, remaining at short notice. Upon the three remaining ships devolved the gigantic task of watching and defending the immensely valuable trade routes off the South American continent. This they had to do, knowing that there was at large an enemy raider more powerful than their combined strength—even if they were able to bring their combined strength to bear upon the enemy at the moment of contact.

The British cruisers of the South America Division immediately available were:—

H.M.S. *Ajax* wearing the Broad Pendant of Commodore Harwood, a 7,000 tons cruiser armed with eight six-inch guns.

H.M.S. *Achilles*.—A cruiser of the same class as H.M.S. *Ajax*, 7,000 tons and armed with eight six-inch guns. This ship had been detached from the New Zealand Division and was manned largely by New Zealanders.

H.M.S. *Exeter*.—A cruiser of 8,400 tons armed with six eight-inch guns.

There was little doubt that the German raider was one of the so-called "pocket battleships"—a vessel of rather more than 10,000 tons with a main armament of six eleven-inch guns and a secondary armament of eight 5.9 inch guns. Moreover, the "pocket battleships" are protected by armour

against which 6-inch gun fire could not be expected to be fully effective at long ranges. The German raider, therefore, had a considerable advantage in armament. Her *secondary* armament was the equal of the total armament of one of the smaller British cruisers, and the weight of metal and explosive which she could fire in one broadside was 4,700 pounds. The total weight of the broadsides of all the three British cruisers combined was only 3,136 pounds.

Against the serious inferiority in armament, the British cruisers could put an advantage of about six knots in speed and, possibly, a greater handiness.

The two essentials to successful action against the enemy were, therefore, concentration of the British forces prior to action being joined, and the employment of tactics which would exploit the advantage in speed and handiness of the British forces. These were problems not easy of solution, because the immense area to be guarded made it necessary for the British forces to be dispersed—a factor which precluded the frequent practising of squadron tactics.

On December 3rd, 1939, the three British cruisers were scattered over two thousand miles.

It was on the afternoon of that day that a report was received from the British S.S. *Doric Star* that she was being attacked by a German "pocket battleship" on the eastern side of the South Atlantic about midway between Sierra Leone and the Cape of Good Hope. The *Doric Star* had sent out the wireless message in spite of the fact that the German raider was firing on her in an attempt to prevent her from using her wireless.

Commodore Harwood correctly anticipated that the raider, knowing that she had been reported by the S.S. *Doric Star*, would leave that area and probably cross the South Atlantic. He estimated that the raider could reach the Rio de Janeiro area by the morning of December 12th, the River Plate area by that evening or the following morning, or the Falkland Islands area by December 14th.

There was nothing to indicate which of these three areas—separated from one another by more than 1,500 miles—was the raider's objective. Commodore Harwood decided, however, that the most important area to be defended was the local area of the large and very valuable trade off the River Plate. He therefore ordered his squadron to concentrate 150 miles off the River Plate Estuary. He also made arrangements to ensure that his ships would not be short of fuel when they arrived at the rendezvous. All this was done in one short signal, after the transmission of which no wireless communication was used, since this would have indicated the movements of British forces to the enemy.

Accurate navigation led to the concentration of the British cruisers at the expected moment—7 a.m. on December 12th.

The greatest use was made of that day. Commodore Harwood explained to his Captains the tactics which he proposed to use in the event of contact being made with the powerful raider. These tactics were then exercised by the squadron. It is noteworthy that the final words of Commodore Harwood's instructions to his Captains were to act "without further orders so as to maintain decisive gun range".

Wednesday, December 13th, dawned fine and clear, with extreme visibility. There was a fairly strong breeze from the south-east, a low swell coming from the same quarter, and a slight sea. The British cruisers were steaming east north east at fourteen knots. They were in single line ahead in the order H.M.S. *Ajax*, H.M.S. *Achilles*, H.M.S. *Exeter*.

At 6.14 a.m. smoke was sighted on the horizon just abaft the port beam, and H.M.S. *Exeter* was ordered to investigate. Two minutes later H.M.S.

*Exeter* reported "I think it is a pocket battleship". The enemy was in sight. Contact had at last been made between British naval forces and the raider which they had been hunting for more than two months.

#### THE SECOND PHASE.

At the time of the sighting of the smoke, the *Admiral Graf Spee* and the British cruisers were steering converging courses. As soon as the smoke was identified as that of the German raider, the ships of the British squadron began to act in accordance with the tactics practised on the previous day. All ships increased speed and began to work up to full speed as rapidly as possible. The eight-inch gun cruiser, H.M.S. *Exeter*, the most powerful unit of the British squadron, made a large alteration of course to the westward, while the two six-inch gun cruisers, H.M.S. *Ajax* and H.M.S. *Achilles*, forged ahead to the north-eastward, altering course slightly in order to close the range rapidly. These manoeuvres were carried out so that the "pocket battleship" should be simultaneously engaged from widely different angles. This would force him either to "split" his main armament in order to engage both units, or to leave one of the British units unengaged by his eleven-inch guns.

At 6.18 a.m. only four minutes after the first sighting of smoke, the *Admiral Graf Spee* opened fire with her main armament of six eleven-inch guns. She had "split" her main armament, and one turret fired at H.M.S. *Exeter* and the other at H.M.S. *Ajax* and *Achilles*. The range was very long, but it was being shortened rapidly by all three of the British cruisers.

Two minutes later, at 6.20 a.m., H.M.S. *Exeter* opened fire with her two forward turrets—four eight-inch guns. The range was then  $9\frac{1}{2}$  sea miles. Her two after guns opened fire as soon as they would bear, two and a half minutes later. This eight-inch gunfire seemed to worry the enemy almost from the beginning. After shifting target rapidly one or twice, the *Admiral Graf Spee* concentrated the fire of all six of her eleven-inch guns on H.M.S. *Exeter*. The *Admiral Graf Spee*'s first salvo fell short of H.M.S. *Exeter*. The second was over, and the third straddled the cruiser.

Meanwhile H.M.S. *Ajax* and H.M.S. *Achilles* had opened fire with their six-inch guns. H.M.S. *Achilles* opened fire at 6.21 a.m. and H.M.S. *Ajax* two minutes later. These two six-inch gun cruisers immediately developed a high rate of fire, combined with great accuracy. The despatch of H.M.S. *Achilles* states that "fire appeared to become rapidly effective," while the despatch of H.M.S. *Ajax* states that "effective fire developed immediately."

At 6.23 a.m. an eleven-inch shell burst just short of H.M.S. *Exeter*, abreast the middle of the ship. Splinters from this shell killed the torpedo tubes crews, damaged the communications of the ship, and riddled the funnels and searchlights. One minute later H.M.S. *Exeter* suffered a direct hit from an eleven-inch shell. This shell struck "B" turret, putting that turret and its two eight-inch guns out of action. Splinters from that shell swept the bridge. All the bridge personnel except the captain and two others were either killed or wounded. The wheel-house communications were wrecked.

Momentarily, the ship was out of control. Good training, however, came to the rescue. As soon as it was realised in the lower conning position that communications with the wheelhouse had ceased to function, that lower position took over the steering. Even so, the ship had begun to swing to starboard, and there was danger of the after guns becoming unable to bear on the target. This was noticed by the torpedo officer, who, on his own initiative, succeeded in getting an order through to the lower conning position which resulted in the ship being brought back to her course.

The captain of H.M.S. *Exeter* was at this time making his way aft. With the bridge out of action, he had decided to fight his ship from the after



conning position. When he reached that position, however, he found that all communications from the after conning position had been destroyed. The steering was therefore changed over to the after steering position, and communication established with that position by means of a chain of messengers. H.M.S. *Exeter* was controlled in this way until the action was broken off. It would be difficult to overestimate the difficulty of controlling a ship by this means during a fierce action, with personnel exposed to eight-inch gun blast as well as heavy fire from the enemy.

During this time H.M.S. *Exeter* received two more hits forward from 11-inch shells, and also suffered some damage by splinters from shells bursting short.

Meanwhile H.M.S. *Ajax* and H.M.S. *Achilles* were making good and rapid shooting with their six-inch guns, and they were closing the range rapidly and drawing ahead on the enemy. That this six-inch gunfire was causing the enemy trouble was shown by the fact that at 6.30 a.m. the *Admiral Graf Spee* again "split" her main armament, switching over one eleven inch turret to engage the six-inch gun cruisers. This temporarily reduced the volume of heavy fire to which H.M.S. *Exeter* was subjected.

The secondary armament of the *Admiral Graf Spee*—5.9-inch guns—had been alternately engaging H.M.S. *Ajax* and H.M.S. *Achilles*, but without effect, although some salvos had fallen close. These guns continued to fire at the six-inch gun cruisers.

At 6.32 a.m. H.M.S. *Exeter* fired her starboard torpedoes at the enemy. These torpedoes went wide, because the *Admiral Graf Spee*, apparently finding the British gunfire too hot, turned 150 degrees away under cover of a smoke screen before the torpedoes reached her.

By 6.36 a.m. the six-inch gun cruisers were doing 28 knots. This rapid increase of speed—the ships had been doing 14 knots only 20 minutes previously—reflects great credit upon the engine and boiler room personnel.

At 6.37 a.m. H.M.S. *Ajax* catapulted her aircraft. Orders to get the aircraft into the air at the earliest possible moment had been given as soon as the alarm was sounded, and the catapult had been prepared and the engine of the aircraft warmed up. The operation of preparing to catapult the aircraft was carried out with great coolness, in spite of the fact that the personnel, and particularly the pilot and the observer of the aircraft, were subjected to severe gun blast from the guns of the two after turrets, which were firing on a forward bearing. The aircraft itself was whipping about badly owing to the gunblast. As soon as the aircraft was in the air it took up a position on the disengaged bow of the six-inch gun cruisers.

At about 6.38 a.m. H.M.S. *Exeter* made a large alteration of course to starboard in order to bring her port torpedo tubes to bear on the enemy. As she was turning she received two more hits from 11-inch shells. One of these hit the foremost turret, putting the turret and its two eight-inch guns out of action. The other entered the hull, did extensive damage and started a fierce fire between decks. The observer in H.M.S. *Ajax's* aircraft reported that "she completely disappeared in smoke and flame and it was feared that she had gone. However, she emerged, and re-entered the action."

H.M.S. *Exeter* had, indeed, suffered severely from the much heavier metal of her adversary. Two of her three turrets were out of action, and the only two guns still in action were aft. All her compass repeaters had been smashed, and the captain was conning the ship with the help of a small boat's compass. What little internal communication was possible was done by messengers. Some compartments were flooded, and a serious fire was raging in her hull. Nevertheless she was resolutely kept in action. Her port torpedoes were fired as soon as the tubes were brought to bear on the enemy. A minute or two later H.M.S. *Exeter* altered course to port—that

is, towards the enemy—and hauled round so that she was on a course approximately parallel to that of the *Admiral Graf Spee* and able to continue to engage the enemy with her two remaining guns. By this time H.M.S. *Exeter* had a seven degree list and was down by the bow, but was still steaming at full power.

At 6.40 a.m. an 11-inch shell burst just short of H.M.S. *Achilles*, in line with the bridge. Splinters from this shell killed four ratings in the main gunnery control position and stunned the gunnery officer, as well as slightly wounding the captain and the chief yeoman of signals on the bridge. Fortunately these splinters did not put the director out of action or damage any important instrument. Nevertheless, the main control position was momentarily out of action through these casualties. The gunnery efficiency of H.M.S. *Achilles* was not, however, impaired. The secondary control position immediately took over the control of the ship's armament, and continued the action until the main control position was ready to resume control some minutes later. The greatest gallantry and fortitude was shown by the surviving personnel of the main control position. A sergeant of Royal Marines remained uncomplainingly at his post and carried out his duties until the end of the action although he was seriously wounded. A seaman boy behaved with exemplary coolness despite the carnage around him and continued his duty of passing information to the guns. He was at one time heard denying most vigorously a report of his own death which had spread round the ship. These were but two instances of gallantry in a fierce action memorable for the bearing of the personnel of the British cruisers.

After 6.40 a.m. the action became virtually a chase. The *Admiral Graf Spee* had turned away to the westward under cover of a smoke screen, and the two six-inch gun cruisers were hauling round to the north-westward in pursuit, accepting the fact that this entailed being unable to bring the after guns to bear on the enemy. They were by now doing 31 knots and still increasing speed. H.M.S. *Ajax* and H.M.S. *Achilles* were fine on the starboard quarter of the *Admiral Graf Spee*, and H.M.S. *Exeter* was rather before the enemy's port beam, still in action with her two remaining guns.

At 6.56 a.m. H.M.S. *Ajax* and H.M.S. *Achilles* altered course to starboard in order to bring all their guns to bear again. This greater volume of fire from these two cruisers appeared to have an immediate effect on the enemy, for the *Admiral Graf Spee* at once altered course away from the cruisers, and at 7.0 she laid a smoke screen in an attempt to throw off the British gunfire. From this time onwards the *Admiral Graf Spee* made frequent alterations of course and great use of smoke screens in her efforts to escape further punishment.

At 7.10 a.m. the range of the enemy from H.M.S. *Ajax* and H.M.S. *Achilles* was still eight miles. Commodore Harwood decided to alter course towards the *Admiral Graf Spee* in order to shorten the range as rapidly as possible, even though this meant that the after guns would once again be unable to bear on the enemy. The British cruisers were now steaming at their utmost speed.

At 7.16 a.m. the *Admiral Graf Spee* made a drastic alteration of course to port under cover of smoke. She was then steering almost directly for H.M.S. *Exeter*, and it seemed that her intention was to finish off that damaged cruiser. Four minutes later, however, the effective support of H.M.S. *Exeter's* consorts obliged the *Admiral Graf Spee* to make another large alteration of course. She hauled round to the north-westward until all her 11-inch guns would bear on H.M.S. *Ajax* and H.M.S. *Achilles*, and at once opened fire on the small British cruisers. The range at that time was 5½ miles. H.M.S. *Ajax* was straddled by 11-inch salvoes, but she was not hit. The

enemy was also firing with her secondary armament of 5.9-inch guns, but their fire had by this time become inaccurate and ragged.

At 7.20 a.m. H.M.S. *Ajax* and H.M.S. *Achilles* had turned to starboard to bring all guns to bear on the enemy. Rapid and accurate shooting was maintained, and a fire was observed amidships in the *Admiral Graf Spee*.

At this time it appeared to Commodore Harwood that the *Admiral Graf Spee* intended to neglect H.M.S. *Exeter* and to close the six-inch gun cruisers on a north-westerly course. Thinking that the enemy was likely to remain on this course for some time, H.M.S. *Ajax* swung to starboard at 7.24 a.m. and fired her port torpedoes at a range of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles. The enemy probably saw these torpedoes being fired, for the *Admiral Graf Spee* at once made a large alteration of course, turning away some 130 degrees to port and at the same time laying a smoke screen. Although the *Admiral Graf Spee* altered back to her north-westerly course three minutes later, this large alteration of course was sufficient to avoid the torpedoes from H.M.S. *Ajax*.

At 7.25 a.m. H.M.S. *Ajax* was hit by an 11-inch shell. This shell put X turret out of action, and, by a stroke of bad luck, it also led to the jamming of Y turret. Thus this one shell robbed H.M.S. *Ajax* of the use of four of her guns, besides causing a number of casualties.

It was at about this time that the pilot of H.M.S. *Ajax's* aircraft, which had been spotting the fall of shot for the six-inch gun cruisers, decided to approach the *Admiral Graf Spee* in an attempt to discover the extent of damage that ship had received. As soon as the aircraft came within range of the enemy's anti-aircraft guns, these opened fire. As the primary and most important duty of the aircraft was spotting the fall of shot for the control of the British cruisers' gunfire, the aircraft retired out of range of the enemy's anti-aircraft guns.

H.M.S. *Exeter* had been dropping gradually astern, as she had been forced to reduce speed owing to the damage forward. She still continued in action, however, engaging the enemy with her two remaining guns firing in local control under the direction of an officer standing in an exposed position on the searchlight platform. At about 7.30 a.m., however, H.M.S. *Exeter's* remaining turret ceased to operate due to flooding. Thus H.M.S. *Exeter* could no longer engage the enemy nor keep up with the action. Reluctantly, therefore, she was forced to break off the action, and at about 7.40 a.m. she turned to the south-east and steamed away at slow speed, starting to repair damage and make herself seaworthy.

That H.M.S. *Exeter* was still afloat and capable of making long sea passages is a tribute to the design and construction of British warships. For the fortitude and resolution of the personnel no praise could be too high. In spite of severe casualties and the almost complete destruction of internal communications, H.M.S. *Exeter* had been kept in action so long as a gun would fire, while fire and repair parties fought to minimise the effects of damage.

At 7.28 a.m. H.M.S. *Ajax* and H.M.S. *Achilles* hauled round to a westerly course in order to close the range still further. Three minutes later H.M.S. *Ajax's* aircraft reported "Torpedoes approaching. They will pass ahead of you". Commodore Harwood, however, decided to take no chances, and the cruisers made a large alteration of course towards the enemy in order to avoid the torpedoes. This alteration of course had the effect of closing the range very rapidly. At this time H.M.S. *Ajax* had only three guns in action, as an accident prevented one gun of B turret from being fired, while both X and Y turrets were out of action as a result of the 11-inch shell hit sustained at 7.25 a.m. Nevertheless, the enemy did not relish the fire of the small British cruisers. The *Admiral Graf Spee* turned



away to the westward almost immediately, making much smoke and zig-zagging in an attempt to throw out the British gunfire.

At this stage of the action the shooting of the six-inch gun cruisers appeared very accurate. H.M.S. *Achilles* was making excellent practice with her eight guns, while H.M.S. *Ajax* was making very good use of her three remaining guns. At 7.36 a.m. the *Admiral Graf Spee* turned to the south-westward in order to bring all her heavy guns to bear on the British cruisers in an attempt to fight them off. The two small British cruisers stood on, however, and by 7.38 a.m. the range was down to 4 miles.

It was then reported to Commodore Harwood that so many rounds had been expended during the continuous periods of rapid firing that there was some danger of running short of ammunition, if the action was prolonged without reaching a decision. This led Commodore Harwood to adopt an immediate change in tactics. He considered that by breaking off the day action and shadowing the enemy till nightfall, he would have a better chance of closing to a range at which his lighter armament and torpedoes would have a decisive effect.

Accordingly, at 7.40 a.m., Commodore Harwood turned H.M.S. *Ajax* and H.M.S. *Achilles* away to the eastward under cover of a smoke screen. Just as the ships began to turn, an 11-inch shell from one of the *Admiral Graf Spee's* last salvos brought down the main topmast of H.M.S. *Ajax*. The bursting of this shell caused some casualties, and the falling of the mast destroyed the wireless aerials. Spare aerials were, however, soon rigged.

The *Admiral Graf Spee* made no attempt to follow the British cruisers, but continued to steam to the westward at a speed of about 22 knots.

After opening the range by steaming to the eastward under cover of a smoke screen for six minutes, Commodore Harwood again turned his ships to the westward and ordered them to take up positions for shadowing the enemy.

That the two small six-inch gun cruisers had not suffered more severely in the close action was undoubtedly due to the speed and skill with which the ships were handled. The engine and boiler room personnel played a most important part in the action, steaming the ships at full power under difficult action conditions with the ships under almost constant use of helm. In the boiler rooms, gun blast caused the flames to leap about a foot out of the fronts of the furnaces, yet the stokers, many of them youngsters, never paused in their work or moved back from the boilers.

### THE THIRD PHASE.

The situation at 8.0 a.m. on December 13th was that the *Admiral Graf Spee* was continuing her flight to the westward; H.M.S. *Ajax* was shadowing on the enemy's port quarter and H.M.S. *Achilles* on the enemy's starboard quarter, both cruisers being about 15 miles from the *Admiral Graf Spee*. H.M.S. *Exeter* was out of sight, drawing away to the south-eastward at slow speed.

At 8.07 a.m., and every hour thereafter, the British cruisers broadcast the position, course, and speed of the German raider, so that British merchant ships in the vicinity would keep out of danger.

Just before 9.15 a.m. H.M.S. *Ajax* recovered her aircraft. The conditions were difficult, but the operation was carried out with great skill and—what was so important—without loss of time.

Commodore Harwood's objective remained the destruction of the enemy in close action after nightfall, but he had to take steps to deal with the situation which might arise if the *Admiral Graf Spee* succeeded in eluding night action. He could not risk further prolonged day action with his

superior adversary owing to the weakening of his force by the departure of H.M.S. *Exeter* and the quantity of ammunition remaining in his six-inch gun cruisers. It was necessary, therefore, to secure reinforcements so that nothing should be left to chance. The nearest British warship was the 10,000 ton 8 inch gun cruiser H.M.S. *Cumberland*, at the Falkland Islands. At 9.46 a.m. Commodore Harwood ordered her to proceed to the River Plate area at full speed. H.M.S. *Cumberland* had, however, picked up jumbled messages which indicated that an action was in progress to the northward, and she had already left the Falkland Islands on the initiative of her commanding officer before these orders were received. On receipt of Commodore Harwood's signal H.M.S. *Cumberland* increased to full speed.

Meanwhile, other operations were set on foot by the Admiralty. Orders were given for the aircraft carrier H.M.S. *Ark Royal* and the battlecruiser H.M.S. *Renown*, and other ships all of which had been operating some 3,000 miles away, to proceed at once to the South American coast, and steps were taken to ensure that adequate supplies of fuel would be available at various strategic points.

By 10.5 a.m. H.M.S. *Achilles*, who had over-estimated the speed of the *Admiral Graf Spee*, had closed the range to eleven and a half miles. The *Admiral Graf Spee* then altered course and fired two three-gun salvos of eleven-inch at H.M.S. *Achilles*. The fact that the *Admiral Graf Spee* altered course sufficiently to bring her forward turret to bear in order to fire these salvos suggests that the enemy's after 11-inch turret was out of action at that time. The first of these salvos from the *Admiral Graf Spee* fell very short, but the second fell close to H.M.S. *Achilles*, which ship was already under helm. H.M.S. *Achilles* turned away at full speed under cover of a smoke screen and resumed shadowing from a longer range.

An hour later a merchant ship was sighted fairly close to the *Admiral Graf Spee*. She appeared to be stopped and blowing off steam. A few minutes later H.M.S. *Ajax* and H.M.S. *Achilles* received a signal from the *Admiral Graf Spee*. It read:—" *Ajax* and *Achilles* from *Admiral Graf Spee*. Please pick up lifeboats of English steamer."

On coming up with the merchant ship H.M.S. *Ajax* found that she was the British S.S. *Shakespeare*, and that all her boats were hoisted. H.M.S. *Ajax* signalled to her asking if she required assistance, and the S.S. *Shakespeare* replied that she was quite all right and did not require assistance. It would appear, therefore, that the signal of the *Admiral Graf Spee* to H.M.S. *Ajax* was a ruse adopted by the German raider in an attempt to shake off her tenacious pursuers.

The shadowing of the *Admiral Graf Spee* by H.M.S. *Ajax* and H.M.S. *Achilles* continued without further incident until 7.15 p.m. At this time the *Admiral Graf Spee* altered course and re-opened fire on H.M.S. *Ajax* with her 11-inch guns at a range of thirteen miles. H.M.S. *Ajax* at once turned away under cover of a smoke screen and resumed a shadowing position out of range.

By this time it was clear that the *Admiral Graf Spee* intended to enter the estuary of the River Plate.

The entrance to the River Plate estuary is guarded by a sand bank sixteen miles long, running across the estuary. This is known as English Bank. Commodore Harwood considered that the *Admiral Graf Spee* might try to elude the British cruisers and break back to the open sea by doubling round this sand-bank. He therefore disposed his forces so as to prevent the enemy slipping out. As soon as the *Admiral Graf Spee* passed the Island of Lobos, and was therefore committed to entering the estuary of the River Plate, the whole duty of shadowing the enemy devolved upon H.M.S. *Achilles*, while H.M.S. *Ajax* proceeded to the south of English Bank so that she would meet

the *Admiral Graf Spee* if she tried to double back towards the open sea after rounding the sandbank.

The sun set at 8.48 p.m. and the *Admiral Graf Spee* was, from H.M.S. *Achilles*, clearly silhouetted at a range of about twelve and a half miles. H.M.S. *Achilles* altered course to the north-westward in order to take full advantage of the afterglow. She had already increased speed in order to close the enemy before dark.

The enemy appeared to resent any shortening of the range by the British cruiser, and at 8.55 p.m. the *Admiral Graf Spee* altered course under cover of a smoke screen and opened fire at H.M.S. *Achilles* with 11-inch guns. H.M.S. *Achilles* at once replied to the German fire, turning away at full speed as she did so, and laying a smoke screen to throw out the enemy's fire and cover her own movements. The *Admiral Graf Spee* ceased firing, and H.M.S. *Achilles* at once turned to the westward again at high speed in order to keep in touch.

At 9.26 p.m. the enemy again laid a smoke screen in an attempt to throw off the pursuit. This failed, and six minutes later the *Admiral Graf Spee* fired an 11-inch salvo at H.M.S. *Achilles*. H.M.S. *Achilles* at once made a large alteration of course to port in order to throw out the enemy's gunfire. On two other occasions, at 9.40 p.m. and at 9.43 p.m., the *Admiral Graf Spee* fired single salvos at H.M.S. *Achilles*. H.M.S. *Achilles* did not reply to these salvos. The loom of the land, now to the north-eastward of H.M.S. *Achilles*, must have made it very difficult for the enemy to see her, and it was considered that the flash of her guns would give away her position. It seemed clear that these sporadic salvos from the *Admiral Graf Spee* were merely attempts to drive off shadowers.

By 10.2 p.m. H.M.S. *Achilles* had closed to five miles from the *Admiral Graf Spee*, and it was possible to determine that the enemy was heading to pass to the northward of English Bank. H.M.S. *Achilles* informed H.M.S. *Ajax* accordingly.

Soon after that time H.M.S. *Achilles* found the *Admiral Graf Spee* very difficult to see owing to low clouds and patches of smoke. The British cruiser accordingly hauled to the southward in order to get the enemy silhouetted against the lights of Montevideo. This manoeuvre was successful.

At 10.48 the *Admiral Graf Spee* was observed to be about 7 miles east of the Whistle buoy at the entrance to the Montevideo channel, and it was clear that the defeated German raider was about to seek the shelter of the neutral harbour of Montevideo.

Throughout the day and the three hours of darkness the shadowing action of the British cruisers had been entirely successful, and every attempt of the *Admiral Graf Spee* to elude or drive off her pursuers had been defeated.

The *Admiral Graf Spee* anchored in Montevideo roads at ten minutes past midnight.

#### THE FOURTH PHASE.

Commodore Harwood had called off the pursuit an hour before the *Admiral Graf Spee* anchored in Montevideo roads, since the enemy's intentions had been by that time clear, and the British Commander was at pains to respect neutral territorial waters.

New dispositions were at once taken up by the British cruisers. The *Admiral Graf Spee* might have taken refuge in Montevideo harbour, but there was no reason to suppose that she intended to remain there. It devolved upon the two small British cruisers to ensure that the German "pocket battleship" did not break out into the open sea, and it was clear that reinforcements could not reach Commodore Harwood for some time.



Nor were the geographical factors of the situation in Commodore Harwood's favour. The Estuary of the River Plate is 120 miles across from Cabo San Antonio, in the Argentine, to Punta del Este, on the Uruguayan coast. Out of the estuary there are three widely separated deep-water channels. The northernmost of these is between the English Bank lightship and Cumberland Shoal. The second deep-water channel, the centre of which lies thirty miles further south, is between the south end of English Bank and the north end of Rouen Bank—a large shoal approximately half way between English Bank and the Argentine Coast. Between Rouen Bank and the Argentine coast is the third deep-water channel, which is nearly thirty miles wide.

There were thus three widely separate routes by which the *Admiral Graf Spee* might break out to the open sea. Commodore Harwood had only two cruisers, and he could not hope to destroy the enemy unless they were concentrated.

There was a danger that the British ships might be surprised by their superior enemy in the dawn light, when the British cruisers would be silhouetted against the lightening eastern sky, while the *Admiral Graf Spee* would be invisible against the dark loom of the land and the offshore mists of dawn. The difficulties of the position were great, but Commodore Harwood had one vital advantage. One might expect the crews of ships which had undergone a fierce action in which they had suffered damage and casualties, and taken part in a long and arduous chase, to be in need of rest. This was not the case. The spirit of the personnel of the British cruisers was such that they showed no fatigue. It was the same spirit which animated Commodore Harwood, commanding a greatly inferior force in a dangerous and difficult situation, to begin the signal telling his ships of his intentions with the words "My object—destruction".

Commodore Harwood reviewed the difficulties with which he was faced and determined upon his course of action. The primary necessity was to keep to seaward of the *Admiral Graf Spee* if she put to sea and at the same time avoid being caught against the dawn light. He therefore ordered H.M.S. *Ajax* and H.M.S. *Achilles* to withdraw from the River Plate and patrol well to seaward during the night and to move back into the estuary after dawn.

The night passed without incident, and as soon as the danger of being silhouetted against the dawn light had passed, the ships closed in towards Montevideo, keeping constant watch over as much of the estuary as was possible.

At 10 p.m. on that day—Thursday, 14th December—the eight-inch gun cruiser H.M.S. *Cumberland* arrived in the River Plate area, having made the long passage from the Falkland Islands in thirty-four hours. This reinforcement enabled Commodore Harwood to dispose his forces so that sectors to seaward of all three of the deep-water channels leading out of the River Plate Estuary could be watched during the night. H.M.S. *Cumberland* patrolled the centre sector, with H.M.S. *Achilles* to the north of her and H.M.S. *Ajax* to the southward. Should the *Admiral Graf Spee* come out, she was to be shadowed, and the three British cruisers were to concentrate sufficiently far to seaward to enable a concerted attack to be delivered on the enemy.

Next day—Friday, 15th December—another problem faced Commodore Harwood. His ships could not keep the sea indefinitely, with boilers always ready to drive the ships at full speed, without further supplies of fuel. The Royal Fleet Auxiliary tanker *Olynthus* was in the vicinity, and H.M.S. *Ajax* was ordered to oil from her at sea, while the operation was covered by the other two cruisers. Fuelling at sea is a difficult operation in anything but

a flat calm, and it was by no means calm. Securing wires, and even two spans of hurricane hawsers, were parted, but the fuelling was successfully accomplished.

Shortly after this, Commodore Harwood received news that the *Admiral Graf Spee* had been granted an extension of her stay in Montevideo up to seventy-two hours, in order to make herself seaworthy. Nevertheless, Commodore Harwood's despatch states:—"I could feel no security that she would not break out at any moment." The strain of watching and waiting, in instant readiness for action, could in no way be relaxed.

Before dawn on Saturday, December 16th, H.M.S. *Cumberland*, H.M.S. *Ajax* and H.M.S. *Achilles* concentrated in the southern part of the River Plate Estuary, and H.M.S. *Ajax* flew off her aircraft to carry out a reconnaissance. The pilot was told to be careful not to fly over territorial waters. The aircraft returned at 8.30 a.m. and reported that it had been impossible to see anything owing to bad visibility.

There was danger that the *Admiral Graf Spee* might take advantage of the mist and try to break out.

The British cruisers at once went to action stations and stood to the northward to intercept the enemy. Information was soon received, however, which indicated that the *Admiral Graf Spee* was still in Montevideo harbour, that she was repairing damage with assistance from the shore, and had provisioned. It was reported as unlikely that the *Admiral Graf Spee* would sail that night, but Commodore Harwood did not feel able to rely upon this report. The unceasing vigilance of the British cruisers continued and Commodore Harwood made a signal to his squadron informing the ships of his intentions in the event of the enemy breaking out during that night.

It was in the late afternoon of this day that Commodore Harwood received the Admiralty's signal informing him of the honours bestowed by His Majesty upon him and the Captains of H.M.S. *Exeter*, H.M.S. *Ajax* and H.M.S. *Achilles*, and of his promotion to Rear-Admiral to date December 13th—the date of the action and chase of the *Admiral Graf Spee*. Admiral Harwood's despatch states:—"This was a most stimulating tonic to us all, and I took steps to pass it on to H.M. Ships under my command, emphasizing the share of all concerned in the honours which their senior officers had received."

The British squadron spent that night patrolling on a north and south line five miles to the east of the English Bank light buoy.

On the morning of Sunday, December 17th, H.M.S. *Achilles* took in oil fuel at sea from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary tanker *Olynthus* while H.M.S. *Cumberland* and H.M.S. *Ajax* acted as a covering force for the operation.

The British squadron then cruised off the south-east of the English Bank, remaining concentrated and ready to take up the same night patrol as on the previous night.

That afternoon messages were received that the *Admiral Graf Spee* was preparing for sea. Admiral Harwood's despatch states:—"We all expected that she would break out at any moment. I would like to place on record the fact that at this stage the most cheerful optimism pervaded all ships in spite of the fact that this was the fifth night of waiting for the enemy."

About 5.30 p.m. on the afternoon of Sunday, December 17th, news was received by Admiral Harwood stating that the *Admiral Graf Spee* was weighing anchor. It seemed that the British expectations of action were to be fulfilled.

H.M.S. *Cumberland*, H.M.S. *Ajax* and H.M.S. *Achilles* at once altered course towards the entrance of the five-mile dredged channel leading into Montevideo roads and the crews went to action stations. H.M.S. *Ajax's*

aircraft was flown off, with orders to report the position and movements of the *Admiral Graf Spee* and of the German ship *Tacoma*, to which ship the *Admiral Graf Spee* was known to have transferred a large number of men.

The *Admiral Graf Spee* left harbour at 6.15 p.m. and proceeded slowly down the dredged channel, after leaving the end of which she turned to the westward. The *Tacoma* also weighed anchor and followed the *Admiral Graf Spee*.

H.M.S. *Ajax*'s aircraft reported the *Admiral Graf Spee* in a position in shallow water about six miles south-west of Montevideo, and shortly afterwards—at 8.54 p.m.—the aircraft signalled " *Admiral Graf Spee* has blown herself up ".

The British cruisers carried on towards Montevideo, proceeding north of the English Bank. H.M.S. *Ajax* recovered her aircraft, and as she was doing so H.M.S. *Achilles* passed her. The two British cruisers which had done such excellent service cheered ship as they passed one another.

Navigation lights were switched on, and the British squadron steamed past the whistle buoy at the entrance to the Montevideo dredged channel, passing within about four miles of the wreck of the *Admiral Graf Spee*. Admiral Harwood's despatch states:—" It was now dark, and she was ablaze from end to end, flames reaching almost as high as the top of the control tower, a magnificent and most cheering sight."

While H.M.S. *Cumberland*, H.M.S. *Ajax*, and H.M.S. *Achilles* were witnessing the ignominious end of the ship which had been the pride of the German navy—which had represented Germany at the Coronation Review at Spithead, and which had carried Herr Hitler triumphantly to Memel—H.M.S. *Exeter*, who had contributed so gallantly to the *Admiral Graf Spee*'s defeat, was at the Falkland Islands.

" I have the greatest pleasure in informing you of the very high standard of efficiency and courage that was displayed by all officers and men throughout the five days of the operation. . . . Within my own knowledge, and from the reports of the Commanding Officers, there are many stories of bravery, devotion to duty, and of the utmost efficiency, which show that H.M. Ships have been forcefully trained and made thoroughly ready to deal with the many and various exigencies of battle. I am submitting separately a list of officers and ratings whom I consider to be especially deserving of award. I would remark, however, that the standard throughout has been so high that the preparation of this list has been very difficult.

I would like also to place on record the honour and pleasure I had in taking one of H.M. Ships of the New Zealand Division into action, and fully concur with the Commanding Officer of H.M.S. *Achilles*' remark that ' New Zealand has every reason to be proud of her seamen during their baptism of fire.'

Further, it is most satisfactory for me to be able to inform you that the machinery and equipment of H.M. Ships proved to be of the highest efficiency, and well able to stand up to the prolonged strain of battle.

The main impression left on my mind is of the adequacy of our peace training. Little that had not been practised occurred, particularly among the repair parties."—*Admiral Harwood's despatch*.

#### ENCLOSURES.

- (1) Chart of *Admiral Graf Spee*'s cruise.
- (2) Track chart of the action of December 13th, 1939.
- (3) Plan of the Estuary of the River Plate.



**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

EDA

This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased  
before being communi-  
cated to anyone (C & A)

LONDON

Dated October 16, 1939

Received 5:53 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

*From W. Churchill*

2061, October 16, 10p.m.

**SECRET** AND PERSONAL FOR THE PRESIDENT.

"The following from naval person.

It is very odd that SCHEER should have made no other prizes since September 30. As I told you we are taking some pains in looking for him. He may be anywhere by now. We have been hitting the U-boats hard with our new apparatus and on Friday 13th four including two of the largest and latest were destroyed. Sinking of ROYAL OAK was a remarkable episode of which I will write you more fully. It in no way affects the naval balance. Our accounts of Hitler's oil position make us feel he is up against time limits. This means that either he will make vehement attack on us for which we are prepared or that he is being held back by counsellors who see the red light. (?) we propose to see what happens feeling fairly confident that all will be well. We should be quite ready to tell you about our asdic methods whenever you  
feel

EDA - 2 - #2051, October 16, 10 p.m. from London

feel they would be of use to the United States Navy and are sure the secret will go no farther. They certainly are very remarkable in results and enable two destroyers to do the work that could not have been done by ten last time. We have not been at all impressed by the accuracy of the Germans air bombing of our warships. They seem to have no effective bomb sights. I have not written as I promised because this and my former cable give all my news."

KENNEDY

RR:DDM

Delighted to have you here at  
White House impossible for me to leave  
country during intensive mobilization  
and clarification naval action in Pacific

I know you will bear in mind  
that the production and allocation  
problems can and will be worked out  
with complete understanding and accord.  
We shall have to use allotted planes  
for about three weeks but hope to  
resume schedule of shipments to you  
and Russia by January first. Practically  
all other land lease articles are  
continuing to be shipped. ~~However~~  
~~in my judgement to start to start~~  
Details of production and allocation can  
be handled at long range.

~~However naval position and other  
matters of strategy~~

Naval situation and other matters  
of strategy require discussion.

My one reservation is great personal  
risk to you - believe this should be  
given most careful consideration for



and we need you  
The Empire needs you at the helm, there too.  
The news is bad but it will be better.

Roosevelt

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*Not sent*

PERSONAL AND ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

December 10, 1941.

FOR FORMER NAVAL PERSON FROM THE PRESIDENT

[I know you will understand why it is impossible for me to leave Washington until January sixth. We are in the throes of mobilization and the preparations for the new Congress.]

*will*  
The production and allocation problems ~~are being~~ worked out with complete understanding and accord. [Because of the naval situation, Hawaii and West Coast] we shall have to use allotted planes for about three weeks but ~~expect~~ to resume regular schedule of shipments to you and Russia by January first. Practically all other Lend Lease articles are continuing to be shipped.

*Refer*  
I wholly agree about the gravity of naval position especially in Pacific. We are both of us reduced to defensive fighting in Pacific Islands and Malaya. [At this moment you cannot help us there and we cannot help you except with very small American naval forces now retiring southward from Philippines.] Only small reinforcements on both sides can be sent to that area immediately. My first impression is that full discussion would be more useful a few weeks hence than immediately.

However, I will wholeheartedly and gladly accept your opinion on timing. Overjoyed to have you here at White House. If you come, give consideration to Canadian route, Bermuda route with plane from there, or sea route all the way.

I know you will disregard anything I may say to you about the personal risk but I want you to remember that it is essential for Empire and us that you stay at the helm.

There are a number of things relating to joint operations that we will be discussing over the radio with you very soon.

Best regards

XXXXXXXXXX

F. D. R.

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

(SENT AS OPNAV'S 110030 CR 0665)

PERSONAL AND ~~SECRET~~

DECEMBER 10, 1941

FOR FORMER NAVAL PERSON FROM THE PRESIDENT

DELIGHTED TO HAVE YOU HERE AT WHITE HOUSE. IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO LEAVE COUNTRY DURING INTENSIVE MOBILIZATION AND CLARIFICATION NAVAL ACTION IN PACIFIC.

I KNOW YOU WILL BEAR IN MIND THAT THE PRODUCTION AND ALLOCATION PROBLEMS CAN AND WILL BE WORKED OUT WITH COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING AND ACCORD. WE SHALL HAVE TO USE ALLOTTED PLANES FOR ABOUT THREE WEEKS BUT HOPE TO RESUME SCHEDULE OF SHIPMENTS TO YOU AND RUSSIA BY JANUARY FIRST. PRACTICALLY ALL OTHER LEND LEASE ARTICLES ARE CONTINUING TO BE SHIPPED. DETAILS OF PRODUCTION AND ALLOCATION CAN BE HANDLED AT LONG RANGE.

NAVAL SITUATION AND OTHER MATTERS OF STRATEGY REQUIRE DISCUSSION.

MY ONE RESERVATION IS GREAT PERSON RISK TO YOU---BELIVE THIS SHOULD BE GIVEN MOST CAREFUL CONSIDERATION FOR THE EMPIRE NEEDS YOU AT THE HELM AND WE NEED YOU THERE TOO.

THE NEWS IS BAD BUT IT WILL BE BETTER.

WARM REGARDS

ROOSEVELT

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**



**PERSONAL AND ~~SECRET~~**

December 10, 1941.

**FOR FORMER NAVAL PERSON FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Delighted to have you here at White House. Impossible for me to leave country during intensive mobilization and clarification naval action in Pacific.

I know you will bear in mind that the production and allocation problems can and will be worked out with complete understanding and accord. We shall have to use allotted planes for about three weeks but hope to resume schedule of shipments to you and Russia by January first. Practically all other lend lease articles are continuing to be shipped. Details of production and allocation can be handled at long range.

Naval situation and other matters of strategy require discussion.

My one reservation is great person risk to you -- believe this should be given most careful consideration for the Empire needs you at the helm and we need you there too.

The news is bad but it will be better.

Warm regards

ROOSEVELT

**REGRADE  
UNCLASSIFIED**

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*Sent*

December 10, 1941.  
6.30 P.M.

CODE ROOM  
NAVY DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Please send enclosed message  
immediately.

GRACE G. TULLY

December 12, 1941

AMERICAN EMBASSY,  
LONDON, (ENGLAND).

TRIPLE PRIORITY

Your 6012, December 12, 11 a.m.

~~SECRET~~ AND PERSONAL FROM THE PRESIDENT FOR  
THE PRIME MINISTER.

Thanks so much for your message. I am in entire agreement and orders have already been issued for the diversion of the convoy, as requested.

HULL

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

PERSONAL AND ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

December 10, 1941.

FOR FORMER NAVAL PERSON FROM THE PRESIDENT

In August it was easy to agree on obvious main items -- Russian aid, Near East aid and new form Atlantic convoy -- but I question whether situation in Pacific area is yet clear enough to make determination of that decisive character. Delay of even a couple of weeks might be advantageous.

I would like to suggest delay in decision reference to conference until early stages of mobilization complete here and situation in Pacific more clarified. We will be in close touch with you during the next few days relative to joint operations. Your and our defensive position in the Pacific requires our naval staff to do everything to tighten that up. Believe developing war will give both you and me a much clearer picture as to whether and when a conference should be held in the near future.

*Hope* The production and allocation problems <sup>will</sup> [are] being worked out with complete understanding and accord. Because of the naval situation, Hawaii and West Coast, we shall have to use allotted planes for about three weeks but [expect] to resume regular schedule of shipments to you and Russia by January first. Practically all other Lend Lease articles are continuing to be shipped.

I think our joint Atlantic position is good. Please let me have your guess as to use of French Fleet against us.

I suggest we defer decision on your visit for [about] one week. Situation ought to be much clearer then.

F. D. R.

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

December 8, 1941.

WINANT

FOR THE FORMER NAVAL PERSON

LONDON

The Senate passed the all-out  
declaration of war eighty-two to  
nothing, and the House has passed  
it three hundred eighty-eight to one.  
Today all of us are in the same boat  
with you and the people of the  
Empire and it is a ship which will  
not and cannot be sunk.

F. D. R.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

June 12

Miss Tully

Showed this to

Lord Halifax Today

Very M<sup>rs</sup>



PERSONAL AND PRIVATE

December 10, 1941.

FOR FORMER NAVAL PERSON FROM THE PRESIDENT

I know you will understand why it is impossible for me to leave Washington until January sixth. We are in the throes of mobilization and the preparations for the new Congress.

The production and allocation problems are being worked out with complete understanding and accord. Because of the naval situation, Hawaii and West Coast, we shall have to use allotted planes for about three weeks but expect to resume regular schedule of shipments to you and Russia by January first. Practically all other Lend Lease articles are continuing to be shipped.

I wholly agree about the gravity of naval position especially in Pacific. We are both of us reduced to defensive fighting in Pacific Islands and Malaya. At this moment you cannot help us there and we cannot help you except with very small American naval forces now retiring southward from Philippines. Only small reinforcements on both sides can be sent to that area immediately. My first impression is that full discussion would be more useful a few weeks hence than immediately.

However, I will wholeheartedly and gladly accept your opinion on timing. Overjoyed to have you here at White House. If you come, give consideration to Canadian route, Bermuda route with plane from there, or sea route all the way.

I know you will disregard anything I may say to you about the personal risk but I want you to remember that it is essential for Empire and us that you stay at the helm.

There are a number of things relating to joint operations that we will be discussing over the radio with you very soon.

Best regards

ROOSEVELT

F. D. R.

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

November 11, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

I am glad to have the copies of my messages to Churchill -- one of March 5, 1940 and the other of May 16, 1940.

The first message was one of a few which I sent to Churchill when he was First Lord of the Admiralty and before he became Prime Minister. All such messages obviously were related to naval matters.

The message of May 16th was sent at just about the time Mr. Churchill became Prime Minister, and it also relates directly to naval matters and was drawn after consultation with the Secretary of State, Secretary of the Navy and Chief of Naval Operations. Both messages are wholly consonant with the policy of this Government to give all possible legal aid to the preservation of British defense.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

-2-

These messages, together with others, might well be called the precursors of two subsequent logical developments. First, the sale for cash to Great Britain, at the time of and subsequent to Dunkirk, of various Army and Navy equipment which we considered at that time either surplusage or out of date -- such as field guns which so greatly helped Britain to build up its defense against probable invasion in July, August and September, 1940.

These messages were also precursors of the arrangement for the sale of the fifty old American destroyers in exchange for the eight naval bases which extend American defense areas a long distance to seaward and northward and southward.

Please show this note to Jimmy Dunn.

F. D. R.





DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

November 10, 1941

My dear Mr. President:

Referring to my telephone conversation with you last Saturday, when I gave you the information regarding certain references to documents which were connected with the Tyler Kent case at the American Embassy in London in the summer of 1940, I am transmitting herewith certain messages which passed between you and Mr. Churchill. The particular message which had a connection with the Kent case is the message no. 872 to the American Embassy at London dated May 16, 1940, 1 p.m. I understand you expressed a desire to have a copy of the Department's telegrams which conveyed these messages.

Faithfully yours,

Enclosures:

Certain messages

The President,

The White House.

November 10, 1941

My dear Mr. President:

Referring to my telephone conversation with you last Saturday, when I gave you the information regarding certain references to documents which were connected with the Tyler Kent case at the American Embassy in London in the summer of 1940, I am transmitting herewith certain messages which passed between you and Mr. Churchill. The particular message which had a connection with the Kent case is the message no. 872 to the American Embassy at London dated May 16, 1940, 1 p.m. I understand you expressed a desire to have a copy of the Department's telegrams which conveyed these messages.

Faithfully yours,

Enclosures:

Certain messages

The President,

The White House.

TELEGRAM SENT

COPY:SS

GRAY  
March 5, 1940

3 p.m.

AMERICAN EMBASSY

LONDON

418

~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~

Your 490, February 28, 8 p.m.

Please convey following message to the Naval Person  
from the President.

QUOTE Upon my return to Washington, I received your  
message. I deeply appreciate your efforts. I am having  
the situation thoroughly studied and will communicate with  
you further as soon as possible. END QUOTE

Roosevelt.

HULL

(CWG)

Eu: JDH:DG

PA/D

A-B

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**



COPY:SS

GRAY  
May 16, 1940

1 p.m.

NO DISTRIBUTION

AMERICAN EMBASSY

LONDON

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

872

URGENT. ~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~ FOR THE AMBASSADOR.

Your 1216, May 15, 6 p.m.

Please transmit the following message from the President to the former naval person:

QUOTE I have just received your message and I am sure it is unnecessary for me to say that I am most happy to continue our private correspondence as we have in the past.

I am, of course, giving every possible consideration to the suggestions made in your message. I shall take up your specific proposals one by one.

First, with regard to the possible loan of forty or fifty of our older destroyers. As you know a step of that kind could not be taken except with the specific authorization of the Congress and I am not certain that it would be wise for that suggestion to be made to the Congress at this moment. Furthermore, it seems to me doubtful, from the standpoint of our own defense requirements, which must inevitably be linked with the defense requirements of this hemisphere and with our obligations in the

in the Pacific, whether we could dispose even temporarily of these destroyers. Furthermore, even if we were able to take the step you suggest, it would be at least six or seven weeks as a minimum, as I see it, before these vessels could undertake active service under the British flag.

Second. We are now doing everything within our power to make it possible for the Allied Governments to obtain the latest types of aircraft in the United States.

Third. If Mr. Purvis may receive immediate instructions to discuss the question of anti-aircraft equipment and ammunition with the appropriate authorities here in Washington, the most favorable consideration will be given to the request made in the light of our own defense needs and requirements.

Fourth. Mr. Purvis has already taken up with the appropriate authorities here the purchase of steel in the United States and I understand that satisfactory arrangements have been made.

Fifth. I shall give further consideration to your suggestion with regard to the visit of the United States Squadron to Irish ports.

Sixth. As you know, the American fleet is now concentrated at Hawaii where it will remain at least for the time being.

I shall communicate with you again as soon as I feel able to make a final decision with regard to some of the other matters dealt with in your message and I hope you will feel free to communicate with me in this way at any time.

- 3 -

The best of luck to you. UNQUOTE

Franklin Roosevelt.

HULL

(SW)

U:SW:IJ



(To go in Navy Code)

November 11, 1941.

**WINANT**

**FOR FORMER NAVAL PERSON**

Halifax has asked the Secretary of War for one of our reports which he has gotten wind of relating to some American Army opinions as to the condition of the defense of the British Isles. Frankly these reports are critical and I have asked the Secretary of War to give them to Halifax because I am very confident that our relations are such that this criticism will not be misunderstood in British Army circles. They are intended to be helpful as between two nations working in the closest friendship. I hope you will personally make this clear to your army and air people.

**ROOSEVELT**

copy to Secretary Hull

To go in Navy circle  
Went  
to former Naval Bureau

Halifax has asked the Secretary of War for one of our reports which he has gotten wind of relating to some American Army opinions as to the condition of the defense of the British Isles. Frankly these reports are critical and I have asked the Secretary of War to give them to Halifax because I am very confident that our relations are such that this criticism will not be misunderstood in British Army circles. They are intended to be helpful as between two nations working in the closest friendship. I hope you will personally make this clear to your army and air people.

Roosevelt

(Copy to Bull)

WAR DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON

November 8, 1941.

Personal and ~~Confidential~~

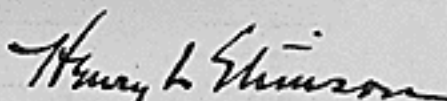
The President,  
The White House.

Dear Mr. President:

I am turning over today to Halifax the estimate upon the defenses of the British Isles. I have seen him and have gone over it with him, and he is going to send the estimate to Churchill direct by the air ferry pouch of next Monday.

I send you herewith the proposed message from you to Churchill which you dictated to me the other day and which I have had written out. It seems to me all right as it is without any change. I showed it to Halifax and he thought it would be very helpful if you sent it to Churchill.

Faithfully yours,



Secretary of War.

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library  
**DECLASSIFIED**  
**DOD DIR.** 5200.9 (9/27/58)

Date- JUL 7 1971

Signature- *RH*



~~SECRET~~

*File*

14 NOVEMBER 1941

FROM WINANT (LONDON)  
FOR THE PRESIDENT

REGARDING YOUR MESSAGE OF THE 11TH, I PERSONALLY GAVE YOUR CABLE TO THE PRIME MINISTER. HE UNDERSTOOD PERFECTLY YOUR GIVING LORD HALIFAX THE MILITARY INFORMATION REFERRED TO IN YOUR MESSAGE. HE TOLD ME AND I ALSO VERIFIED THE FACT THAT BOTH THE ARMY AND THE AIRFORCE WERE GLAD TO RECEIVE OUR ESTIMATES OF THE MILITARY SITUATION IN ENGLAND. THE PRIME MINISTER DEEPLY APPRECIATED YOUR THOUGHTFULNESS IN WHAT YOU DID AND YOUR CONSIDERATION IN NOTIFYING HIM.

CR 0736

COPY FOR THE PRESIDENT.

NOTE: ( REPRODUCTION OF THIS MATERIAL IN ANY FORM IS NOT AUTHORIZED EXCEPT BY SPECIFIC APPROVAL OF THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY)

DECLASSIFIED

By Authority of

*State Dept.*  
*Letter, 8/14/69*

file  
personal

My dear Mr. Secretary:

I am sending you the message which I received from Churchill the other day and a draft of a reply which has been prepared in the Department of Agriculture.

I wish you would have this reviewed by the State Department before it is transmitted to London.

Very sincerely yours,

Enclosure.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

October 15, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Here is a draft of an answer to the cable on wheat that Churchill sent you the other day. It was prepared by Agriculture and has been approved by Milo Perkins.

I suggest that you send Secretary Hull the attached note.

HARRY L. HOPKINS



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL RELATIONS  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Oct. 11, 1941.

Mr. Hopkins:

Attached is a suggested reply to the cablegram received through Ambassador Winant. This reply has been prepared after consulting with Paul Appleby, who recently discussed the wheat agreement with British officials in London, and with Harry Hawkins of the State Department.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. M. Anderson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the document.

TELEGRAM

~~SECRET~~  
TO: AMEMBASSY  
LONDON

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~ FOR THE FORMER NAVAL PERSON FROM THE PRESIDENT

The view expressed in your note transmitted by Ambassador Winant in telegram No. 4796, October 8, has been carefully considered. I fully agree that the Wheat Agreement should avoid any impression of forcing wheat importing countries of Europe, as a condition of immediate post-war relief, into commitments which they had no part in formulating and see no objection to your instructing your delegation to emphasize this consideration in the discussions. I should like, however, to offer the following general comments with respect to our attitude on the subject of the wheat discussions.

We have not looked upon these discussions as a conference in any formal sense but rather as a meeting of competent experts in a position to reflect the views of their respective governments on one important problem in the general field of Anglo-American collaboration. We hope that it will be possible to find a large area of agreement on the part of the four overseas exporting countries and the United Kingdom as to the means of tackling the world wheat problem on an international basis. It is our feeling that marked progress was made in this direction in the discussions during last July and August.

So far as the forthcoming discussions are concerned, I may say that we hold no brief for the precise form or wording of the draft prepared during the meeting of last July. There are undoubtedly a number of points that will need to be revised in the light of the study that has been given to the question by the various governments since the discussions were adjourned last August. We attach special importance at this juncture to what seems to us to be two vital aspects of any effective international wheat agreement, namely, first, the equitable sharing of such post-war market as may be available to the four overseas exporting countries, including the questions of distribution of wheat for relief after the war, the establishment of the principle of an international ever normal granary on a practical working basis, and, second, the cooperation of the United Kingdom as the world's greatest wheat importing country in constructing an international wheat agreement which will work to the mutual benefit of both importing and exporting countries.

Some provisions dealing broadly with the cooperative and complementary relation of European production programs to those of the exporting countries probably should be included, otherwise the danger of adverse propaganda would still remain. I would,



therefore, suggest your delegates be instructed to deal with the provisions relating to the production of importing countries in such manner as to minimize the danger of adverse propaganda. One way of doing this might be by flatly indicating that the approval and cooperation of such countries will be sought after the war and before the agreement becomes effective. This frankness together with the promise of wheat for relief distribution in Europe might be good offensive propaganda.

I am entirely in agreement with you as to the importance of considering the interest of Russia in this matter but it seems to me it should be entirely feasible to arrive at a framework which will leave the way open for Russian adherence.

HLH/lb 10/13/41

Suggested reply to Ambassador Winant's telegram No. 4796, Oct. 8, 1941,  
9 P.M.

The view expressed in your note transmitted by Ambassador Winant in telegram No. 4796, October 8, has been carefully considered. I fully agree that the Wheat Agreement should avoid any impression of forcing wheat importing countries of Europe, as a condition of immediate post-war relief, into commitments which they had no part in formulating and see no objection to your instructing your delegation to emphasize this consideration in the discussions. I should like, however, ~~to take this opportunity~~ to offer the following general comments with respect to our attitude on the subject of the wheat discussions.

We have not looked upon these discussions as a conference in any formal sense but rather as a meeting of competent experts in a position to reflect the views of their respective governments on one concrete and important problem in the general field of Anglo-American collaboration. ~~It has been hoped and~~ ~~we~~ still hope that it will be possible to find a large area of agreement on the part of the four overseas exporting countries and the United Kingdom as to the means of tackling the world wheat problem on an international basis. It is our feeling that marked progress was made in this direction in the discussions during last July and August.

So far as the forthcoming discussions are concerned, I may say that we hold no brief for the precise form or wording of the draft prepared during the meeting of last July. There are undoubtedly a number

of points that will need to be revised in the light of the study that has been given to the question by the various governments since the discussions were adjourned last August. ~~I may say in this connection~~ ~~that~~ we attach special importance at this juncture to what seem<sup>s</sup> to us to be two vital aspects of any effective international wheat agreement, namely, first, the equitable sharing of such post-war market as may be available to the four overseas exporting countries, including the questions of distribution of wheat for relief after the war, the establishment of the principle of an international ever normal granary on a practical working basis, and, second, the cooperation of the United Kingdom as the world's greatest wheat importing country in constructing an international wheat agreement which will work to the mutual benefit of both importing and exporting countries.

*I want*  
I am entirely in agreement with you as to the importance of considering the interest of Russia in this matter but it seems to me it should be entirely feasible to arrive at a framework which will leave the way open for Russian adherence.



ECONOMIC DEFENSE BOARD

WASHINGTON, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October 13, 1941

Mr. Harry Hopkins,  
The White House.

Dear Harry:

In view of the time urgency I did not attempt to re-write this cable although I think it is a little wordy. I do not, however, disagree with its subject matter. It seems to me that the cable could be made a more direct answer by inserting a paragraph on page 2 at the point I have marked. That suggested insert which I have cleared with Les Wheeler follows:

"Some provisions dealing broadly with the cooperative and complementary relation of European production programs to those of the exporting countries probably should be included, otherwise the danger of adverse propaganda would still remain. I would, therefore, suggest your delegates be instructed to deal with the provisions relating to the production of importing countries in such manner as to minimize the danger of adverse propaganda. One way of doing this might be by flatly indicating that the approval and co-operation of such countries will be sought after the war and before the agreement becomes effective. This frankness together with the promise of wheat for relief distribution in Europe might be good offensive propaganda."

Sincerely yours,

*W. L. Perkins*  
Executive Director.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

October 10, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. WHEELER:

THE PRESIDENT ASKED ME TO  
SEND THIS TO YOU. WILL YOU PLEASE  
READ IT AND RETURN IT WITH ANY  
COMMENTS YOU HAVE TO MAKE.

HARRY L. HOPKINS

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

October 11, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. VANNEVAR BUSH

I have sent the letter, as you suggested, and I suggest we fill in the blank, not with a letter of the alphabet, but with the word "Maudson".

I enclose the letter to Mr. Churchill with that notation in it.

Is this all right?

F. D. R.



REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED



C O P Y

*Bent*

FROM THE OFFICE OF

V. BUSH

October 13, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Unless you instruct otherwise, I will change the code word in the letter from Maudson to Mayson. On Friday I will seal it, and deliver it to Hovde, with explicit instructions. He will leave by plane Monday or very soon thereafter.

I suggest the change because I fear that the word Maud may convey too much. Someone may know on what the Maud Committee is working.

(Signed) V. B.  
V. Bush

O. K.

F. D. R.

WASHINGTON

THE WHITE HOUSE

October 11, 1941.

My dear Mr. Churchill:-

It appears desirable that we should soon correspond or converse concerning the subject which is under study by your MAUD committee, and by Dr. Bush's organization in this country, in order that any extended efforts may be coordinated or even jointly conducted. I suggest, for identification, that we refer to this subject as MAUDSON.

I send this message by Mr. Hovde, head of the London office of our scientific organization, as he can, if necessary, identify the subject more explicitly, or answer your questions concerning the form of organization by which it is now being handled in this country.

With every good wish,

Always sincerely,

The Honorable  
Winston Churchill,  
Prime Minister of Great Britain,  
10 Downing Street,  
London,  
England.

Private

DRAFT OF LETTER

The Honorable Winston Churchill,  
10 Downing Street,  
London, England.

My dear Mr. <sup>Winston</sup>Churchill:

It appears desirable that we should soon correspond or converse concerning the subject which is under study by your MAUD committee, and by Dr. Bush's organization in this country, in order that any extended efforts may be coordinated or even jointly conducted. I suggest, for identification, that we refer to this subject as W. M. H. C. B.

I send this message by Mr. Hovde, head of the London office of our scientific organization, as he can, if necessary, identify the subject more explicitly, or answer your questions concerning the form of organization by which it is now being handled in this country.

Very sincerely yours,



~~TOP SECRET~~  
TO: AMEMBASSY  
LONDON

~~SECRET~~ FOR THE FORMER NAVAL PERSON FROM THE PRESIDENT

I SHALL BE LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING ATLEE.

I AM ALSO DELIGHTED WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE  
MOSCOW CONFERENCE. THE IMPORTANT THING NOW IS TO GET  
THE GOODS TO THEM.

ADMIRAL STARK TELLS ME THAT THE DIFFICULT PROBLEM  
I PRESENTED TO YOU YESTERDAY IS ON THE WAY TO A  
SOLUTION WITH REGARD TO WHICH I APPRECIATE YOUR  
COOPERATION.

HLH/lmb

10/8/41

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

October 7, 1941

*Shift  
Ok'd by  
President*

FROM: THE PRESIDENT  
TO: A FORMER NAVAL PERSON

At this very late date I deeply regret necessity of reopening with you what had been agreed on in regard to American Flag Navy operated transports going to England for proposed troop movement to Near East.

I do so with utmost confidence that you will sympathetically consider the problem and my frank statement of it.

I have determined to send a message to Congress in the immediate future recommending sweeping amendments to our Neutrality Act. I am convinced that that Act is seriously crippling our means of helping you. I want not only to arm all of our ships but I want to get the authority from Congress to send American Flagships directly into British ports. After long conferences with congressional leaders, I have reached the conclusion that it would be disastrous to this legislation if one of our transports proceeding to or from Britain and in

British waters or British port, were to be sunk, when manned by U.S. Navy officers and men. Such an event might <sup>propaganda</sup> ~~set back~~ our Lend-Lease and other aid ~~disastrously.~~ ~~[After mature study and thought, I am compelled to tell you that I believe the risk~~ ~~of this proposed voyage (outweighs) the broader and longer range picture.]~~ <sup>(imperils)</sup>

I appreciate to the full your dilemma of rearranging plans for transfer of men to Near East ~~[even though the total of these men is only a portion of the major project]~~

I have given careful study to other means of accomplishing same ultimate objective.

As a first alternative, I suggest you ~~send here,~~ <sup>or</sup> transfer from your ships under repair here, enough officers and men to man our six transports. This would take a total of about 3,000 officers and men. The ships would then sail from Canadian ports under British Flag and with British crews under Lend-Lease arrangements.

J. L. M.



The second alternative would be for U.S. to continue manning these six transports, send them to Halifax, you to send the troops to board transports in Halifax. We would then transport the ~~whole outfit~~ <sup>expedition</sup> through Western Hemisphere waters and thence to Near East destination. We believe, if considered advisable by Navy Department and Admiralty, we could escort this fast convoy all the way.

I feel that one of the two foregoing alternatives is necessary in order not to jeopardize the ~~program~~ <sup>legislation</sup> to eliminate the restrictions under which we are now operating, or to break down growing public sentiment for policy of additional aid and cause this sentiment to reverse itself. Of the two alternatives offered, I prefer the first, namely your <sup>using your</sup> ~~(sending)~~ crews ~~from here~~ to man transports.

I have directed Admiral Stark to acquaint Admiral Little with the foregoing.

Barrow

*draft*  
October 7, 1941

FROM: THE PRESIDENT

TO: A FORMER NAVAL PERSON

At this very late date I deeply regret necessity of reopening with you what had been agreed on in regard to American Flag Navy operated transports going to England for proposed troop movement to Near East.

I do so with utmost confidence that you will sympathetically consider the problem and my frank statement of it.

I have determined to send a message to Congress in the immediate future recommending sweeping amendments to our Neutrality Act. I am convinced that that Act is seriously crippling our means of helping you. I want not only to arm all of our ships but I want to get the authority from Congress to send American Flagships directly into British ports. After long conferences with congressional leaders, I have reached the conclusion that it would be disastrous to this legislation if one of our transports proceeding to or from Britain and in

British waters or British port, were to be sunk, when manned by U.S. Navy officers and men. Such an event might set back our Lend-Lease and other aid disastrously. After mature study and thought, I am compelled to tell you that I believe the risk of this proposed voyage outweighs the broader and longer range picture.

I appreciate to the full your dilemma of rearranging plans for transfer of men to Near East, even though the total of these men is only a portion of the major project.

I have given careful study to other means of accomplishing same ultimate objective.

As a first alternative, I suggest you send here, or transfer from your ships under repair here, enough officers and men to man our six transports. This would take a total of about 3,000 officers and men. The ships would then sail from Canadian ports under British Flag and with British crews under Lend-Lease arrangements.



The second alternative would be for U.S. to continue manning these six transports, send them to Halifax, you to send the troops to board transports in Halifax. We would then transport the whole outfit through Western Hemisphere waters and thence to Near East destination. We believe, if considered advisable by Navy Department and Admiralty, we could escort this fast convoy all the way.

I feel that one of the two foregoing alternatives is necessary in order not to jeopardize the program to eliminate the restrictions under which we are now operating, or to break down growing public sentiment for policy of additional aid and cause this sentiment to reverse itself. Of the two alternatives offered, I prefer the first, namely your sending crews here to man transports.

*Wright*  
October 7, 1941.

FROM: THE PRESIDENT

TO: A FORMER NAVAL PERSON

At this very late date I deeply regret necessity of re-opening with you what had been agreed on in regard to American Flag Navy operated transports going to England for proposed troop movement to Near East.

I do so with utmost confidence that you will sympathetically consider the problem <sup>met</sup> ~~of~~ my frank statement of it.

After long conferences with Congressional leaders in regard to repeal of certain sections of our Neutrality Act, especially regarding arming U. S. merchant ships and permission to send them direct under American Flag and with American crews into British ports, I have reached conclusion that [for political reasons and public support] it would be disastrous to <sup>an</sup> enlarging program of aid to Britain if one of our transports, proceeding to <sup>in British waters or British port</sup> or from Britain, were to be sunk, when manned by U. S.

*A*

Navy officers and men, ~~in or near British waters or in a~~

~~British port.~~ Such an event might set back our Lend-Lease

and other aid disastrously. After mature study and thought,

I am compelled to <sup>tell you I believe</sup> ~~[decide]~~ that the risk of this proposed

voyage outweighs the broader and longer range picture.

I appreciate to the full your dilemma of rearranging plans for transfer of men to Near East, even though the total of these men is only a portion of the major project.

I have given careful study to other means of accomplishing same ultimate objective <sup>potential</sup> ~~[in such a way as~~ <sup>repurcussions here</sup> ~~to greatly modify the political and public opinion danger here]~~

As a first alternative, I suggest you send here, or transfer from your ships under repair here, enough officers and men to man our six transports. This would take a total of about 3,000 officers and men. The ships <sup>from Canadian ports</sup> would then sail <sup>and</sup> under British Flag and with British crews under Lend-Lease arrangements. <sup>and</sup> (This would involve delay of two or three weeks.) <sup>and</sup>

*it is the course I should prefer.*



The second alternative would be for U. S. to continue manning these six transports, send them to Halifax, you to send the troops to board transports in Halifax. We would then transport the whole outfit through Western Hemisphere waters and thence to Near East destination. We believe, if considered advisable by Navy Department and Admiralty, we could escort this fast convoy all the way.

✓ [Furthermore, if this method were decided on we might be able to make (could assure you of) a second similar trip to be undertaken immediately after return of these six ships from the first trip.

Decision regarding this second trip could be delayed for the present.

I feel that one of the two foregoing alternatives is necessary in order not to ~~endanger~~ jeopardize

but from the long-range point of view, I want nothing

~~to stop the flow of food and munitions~~ <sup>we need 1200 1200 & Co.</sup> or to break down

growing public sentiment for policy of additional aid

and cause this sentiment to reverse itself. Of the two alternatives offered I prefer the first, namely, your sending crews here to man transports -

THROUGH NAVY RADIO

TELEGRAM

**SECRET**

SEPTEMBER 30, 1941

TO: AMERICAN EMBASSY  
LONDON

FOR THE FORMER NAVAL PERSON FROM THE PRESIDENT  
I HAVE CABLED OUR MISSION IN MOSCOW TODAY THAT  
WE CAN MAKE AVAILABLE FROM JULY 1, 1942 TO  
JANUARY 1, 1943 1200 TANKS A MONTH FOR ENGLAND AND  
RUSSIA COMBINED; FROM JANUARY 1, 1943 TO JULY 1, 1943  
2000 TANKS A MONTH. I TOLD OUR MISSION TO MAKE A  
COMMITMENT TO RUSSIA OF 400 TANKS A MONTH BEGINNING  
JULY 1 IN ADDITION TO THOSE ALREADY PROMISED AND  
ADVISED THEM AFTER CONSULTATION WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVES  
TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT STILL FURTHER IF THAT SEEMED  
DESIRABLE.

WE ARE MAKING COMMITMENT TO THE RUSSIANS OVER  
AND ABOVE THE COMMITMENTS MADE TO JULY 1 OF 3600 COMBAT  
PLANES BETWEEN JULY 1, 1942 AND JULY 1, 1943.

THIS LARGE INCREASE IN THE TANKS IS DUE TO OUR  
DOUBLING OUR WHOLE TANK PRODUCTION ~~SO~~ WE ARE GOING TO  
PUT THE PRODUCTION TO WELL OVER 2500 TANKS A MONTH.

(Signed) Roosevelt

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

SEPTEMBER 30, 1941.

FROM: OPNAV

TO : ALUSNA LONDON (AMERICAN EMBASSY)

FROM THE PRESIDENT FOR THE FORMER NAVAL PERSON.

I HAVE CABLED OUR MISSION IN MOSCOW TODAY THAT WE CAN MAKE AVAILABLE FROM JULY 1, 1942 TO JANUARY 1, 1943 1200 TANKS A MONTH FOR ENGLAND AND RUSSIA COMBINED; FROM JANUARY 1, 1943 TO JULY 1, 1943, 2000 TANKS A MONTH. I TOLD OUR MISSION TO MAKE A COMMITMENT TO RUSSIA OF 400 TANKS A MONTH BEGINNING JULY 1 IN ADDITION TO THOSE ALREADY PROMISED AND ADVISED THEM AFTER CONSULTATION WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVES TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT STILL FURTHER IF THAT SEEMED DESIRABLE.

WE ARE MAKING COMMITMENT TO THE RUSSIANS OVER AND ABOVE THE COMMITMENTS MADE TO JULY 1 OF 3600 COMBAT PLANES BETWEEN JULY 1, 1942 AND JULY 1, 1943.

WE ARE GOING TO PUT THE PRODUCTION OF TANKS TO WELL OVER 2500 A MONTH. THIS LARGE INCREASE IN TANKS IS DUE TO OUR DOUBLING OUR WHOLE TANK PRODUCTION.

SIGNED ROOSEVELT.

COPY FOR THE WHITE HOUSE.

CR 0118.

NOTE: (REPRODUCTION OF THIS MATERIAL IN ANY FORM IS NOT AUTHORIZED EXCEPT BY SPECIFIC APPROVAL OF THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY)

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

SECRET



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*Box*

October 1, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR MISS TULLY:

WILL YOU PLEASE SHOW THIS TO  
THE PRESIDENT FOR HIS APPROVAL AND  
LET ME KNOW IF HE SENDS IT?

HARRY L. HOPKINS

**TELEGRAM**

**TO: AMEMBASSY  
LONDON**

**September 25, 1941**

**FOR THE FORMER NAVAL PERSON FROM THE PRESIDENT.**

**I WIRED HARRIMAN JUST BEFORE HE LEFT THAT THE  
FOLLOWING NUMBER OF TANKS WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR  
EXPORT BY MONTHS AS FOLLOWS:**

**MEDIUM TANKS OCTOBER 116 NOVEMBER 184 DECEMBER 304  
JANUARY 415 FEBRUARY 425 MARCH 435 APRIL 520 MAY 810  
JUNE 785 TOTAL 3994.**

**LIGHT TANKS OCTOBER 183 NOVEMBER 180 DECEMBER 180  
JANUARY 100 FEBRUARY 110 MARCH 300 APRIL 300 MAY 300  
JUNE 300 TOTAL 1953.**

**I HAVE SINCE NOTIFIED HARRIMAN THAT FIFTY MORE LIGHT  
TANKS WILL BE AVAILABLE PRIOR TO JANUARY 1. THE NUMBER  
OUTLINED ABOVE ARE MINIMUM FIGURES BECAUSE I HAVE  
DIRECTED THAT PRODUCTION DURING THE NEXT NINE MONTHS BE  
INCREASED BY TEN OR FIFTEEN PERCENT. IN ADDITION TO  
THAT WE ARE PLANNING TO INCREASE OUR TOTAL PRODUCTION  
NEARLY TWOFOLD. THE TANKS AVAILABLE FOR EXPORT ARE  
IRRESPECTIVE OF SOURCE OF FUNDS USED TO BUILT THEM.  
WE ARE KEEPING ONLY A VERY MODEST NUMBER FOR OURSELVES.**

**ROOSEVELT**

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

TELEGRAM

~~TOP SECRET~~

September 17, 1941

TO: AMEMBASSY

LONDON

FOR THE FORMER NAVAL PERSON FROM THE PRESIDENT  
FOR YOUR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION I HELD A  
PRELIMINARY CONFERENCE ON TANK PRODUCTION THIS MORNING.  
PRESENT PRODUCTION SCHEDULE IS COMING ALONG VERY WELL  
AND GOES UP EACH MONTH UNTIL IT REACHES 1400 A MONTH IN  
MAY 1942. I AM MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO ACCELERATE THIS  
RATE BUT MORE IMPORTANT I AM GOING TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM  
WHICH I HOPE WILL DOUBLE THIS MONTHLY CAPACITY AND GET  
OUR FULL TANK CAPACITY UP TO A MINIMUM OF 2500 A MONTH  
AND A MAXIMUM OF 3000 A MONTH. AS SOON AS I CAN HOLD A  
FURTHER CONFERENCE WITH THE ARMY ON MONDAY OR TUESDAY  
OF NEXT WEEK I WILL CABLE THE EXACT NUMBERS OF TANKS  
WHICH CAN BE EXPORTED FROM THIS COUNTRY EACH MONTH  
BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 1, 1941 THROUGH JUNE 1942. THE  
NUMBER WILL BE SUBSTANTIAL AND I THINK NOT A DISCOURAGING  
ONE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF OUR TWO MISSIONS GOING TO  
MOSCOW.

YOU HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN ADVISED BY THE ADMIRALTY  
THAT THE TRANSPORT PLAN HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

September 18, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR MISS TULLY:

THE PRESIDENT SENT THIS  
CABLE LAST NIGHT.

HARRY L. HOPKINS

304  
TELEGRAM

~~MOST SECRET~~

SEPTEMBER 12, 1941

TO: AMEMBASSY  
LONDON

FOR THE FORMER NAVAL PERSON FROM THE PRESIDENT  
UPON THE RECOMMENDATION OF GENERAL MARSHALL,  
LIEUTENANT GENERAL STANLEY D. EMBICK IS BEING SENT  
TO LONDON TO REPRESENT THE CHIEF OF STAFF IN THE  
DISCUSSION WITH BRITISH ARMY AND ROYAL AIR FORCE  
REFERRED TO IN HOPKINS CABLE TO YOU OF  
SEPTEMBER 9, 1941.

Roosevelt

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

Washington, D. C.

September 11, 1941.

TO: The Prime Minister  
FROM: The President

Upon the recommendation of General Marshall,  
Lieutenant General Stanley D. Embick is being sent  
to London to represent the Chief of Staff in the  
discussions with British Army and <sup>Royal</sup> Air Force\*  
referred to in Hopkins cable to you of September  
9, 1941.



~~NO CONFIDENTIAL~~

SEPTEMBER 9, 1941

TO: AMEMBASSY  
LONDON

~~REGRADED~~  
~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM MR. HOPKINS. TO BE  
COMMUNICATED TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

In preparation for the Russian conference, the President has informed the Secretaries of War and Navy that substantial commitments of munitions help must be provided for Russia so long as she fights the Axis. These departments will submit to the President by September 10th their recommendations of production allocations to Great Britain and Russia from the present to June 30, 1942 from America's munitions production in excess of our own minimum requirements. The President has also instructed the Office of Production Management to submit recommendations as to the quantities of raw and intermediate materials and manufacturing equipment that could be made available to Russia by July first next. He is convinced that substantial and comprehensive commitments should be made to Russia by Great Britain and the United States at the Moscow conference.

Furthermore, the President has instructed the Secretaries to give him their tentative conclusions as to the ultimate over-all production effort of important items needed for victory. It is his intention once this information is available to set in motion immediately plans for a very substantial increase in the output of munitions by this country.

With this information available, the President proposes that a conference be held in London about September 15th between high military officials of this

government and corresponding officials of the British government for the purpose, first, to state the amount of material aid, including that already allocated to the British government, which this government is prepared to make available by July 1, 1942, and to discuss with the British officials the allocations which will be made therefrom for the purpose of aiding Russia, and, second, to obtain from the British officials the complete estimate of what British requirements for material aid from this country will be in order to accomplish a victory over the Axis powers.

The President hopes that at the London conference a decision can be reached, subject to his and the Prime Minister's approval, as to the aid to be furnished Russia and Great Britain to July 1942. He considers it essential that the two Russian missions be instructed to communicate to the Russian Government the definite aid to be furnished by the American and British governments prior to July 1942. These missions should also obtain from the Russian Government full information of Russian production capacity and Russian requirements from outside sources necessary to keep the Russian forces in the field for the purpose of defeating the Axis powers.

With reference to the Victory Production Program, the understanding of British and Russian requirements will make it possible to examine all needs with a view of integrating and relating them to the realities of production possibilities.



The President has instructed our mission to leave on Saturday the thirteenth. They should be in London by the fifteenth. It seems to the President the conferences indicated above could be held during the next four or five days and therefore the date of the Moscow conference could be placed around the 25th of September instead of the first of October. It seems to him in the light of the Prime Minister's recent cable the sooner this mission gets to Moscow the better.

If the foregoing meets with the Prime Minister's concurrence, it is requested that the President be informed to this effect at the earliest convenience.

HOPKINS



~~SECRET~~ SEPTEMBER 8, 1941 *Not sent*

TO: AMEMBASSY

LONDON

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

FOR THE FORMER NAVAL PERSON FROM THE PRESIDENT

In preparation for the Russian conference, I have informed the Secretaries of War and Navy that substantial commitments of munitions help must be provided for Russia so long as she fights the Axis. These departments will submit to me by September 10th their recommendations of production allocations to Great Britain and Russia from the present to June 30, 1942 from America's munitions production in excess of our own minimum requirements. I have also instructed the Office of Production Management to submit recommendations as to the quantities of raw and intermediate materials and manufacturing equipment that could be made available to Russia by July first next. I am convinced that substantial and comprehensive commitments should be made to Russia by Great Britain and the United States at the Moscow conference.

Furthermore, I have instructed the Secretaries to give me their tentative conclusions as to the ultimate over-all production effort of important items needed for victory. It is my intention once this information is available to set in motion immediately plans for a very substantial increase in the output of munitions by this country.

With this information available, I propose that a conference be held in London about September 15th between high military officials of this government and corresponding officials of your government for the purpose, first, to state the amount of material aid, including that already allocated to your government, which this government is prepared to make available by July 1, 1942, and to discuss with your officials the allocations which will be made therefrom for the purpose of aiding Russia, and, second, to obtain from your officials the complete estimate of what your requirements for material aid from this country will be in order to accomplish a victory over the Axis powers.

I hope that at the London conference a decision can be reached, subject to our approval, as to the aid to be furnished Russia and Great Britain to July 1942. I consider it essential that our two Russian missions be instructed to communicate to the Russian Government the definite aid to be furnished by our governments prior to July 1942. These missions should also obtain from the Russian Government full information of Russian production capacity and Russian requirements from outside sources necessary to keep the Russian forces in the field for the purpose of defeating the Axis powers.

With reference to the Victory Production Program, the understanding of British and Russian requirements will make it possible to examine all needs with a view of integrating and relating them to the realities of production possibilities.

I have instructed our mission to leave on Saturday the thirteenth. They should be in London by the fifteenth. It seems to me the conferences indicated above could be held during the next four or five days and therefore the date of the Moscow conference could be placed around the 25th of September instead of the first of October. It seems to me in the light of your recent cable the sooner this mission gets to Moscow the better.

If the foregoing meets with your concurrence, I request that you inform me to this effect at your earliest convenience.



*This has been approved by the Secretary of War - The General Staff*  
*Not secret*  
*9/8/41*

In preparation for the Russian conference, I have informed the Secretaries of War and Navy that substantial commitments of munitions help must be provided for Russia so long as she fights the Axis. These departments will submit to me by September 10th their recommendations of production allocations to Great Britain and Russia from the present to June 30, 1942 from America's munitions production in excess of our own minimum requirements. I have also instructed the Office of Production Management to submit recommendations as to the quantities of raw and intermediate materials and manufacturing equipment that could be made available to Russia by July first next. I am convinced that substantial and comprehensive commitments should be made to Russia by Great Britain and the United States at the Moscow conference.

Furthermore, I have instructed the Secretaries to give me their tentative conclusions as to the ultimate over-all production effort of important items needed for victory.

With this information available, I propose that a conference be held in London about September 15th between high military officials of this government and corresponding officials of your government for the purpose, first, to state the amount of material aid, including

that already allocated to your government, which this government is prepared to make available by July 1, 1942, and to discuss with your officials the allocations which will be made therefrom for the purpose of aiding Russia, and, second, to obtain from your officials the complete estimate of what your requirements for material aid from this country will be in order to accomplish a victory over the Axis powers.

I hope that at the London conference a decision can be reached, subject to our approval, as to the aid to be furnished Russia and Great Britain to July 1942. I consider it essential that our two Russian missions be instructed to communicate to the Russian Government the definite aid to be furnished by our governments prior to July 1942. These missions should also obtain from the Russian Government full information of Russian production capacity and Russian requirements from outside sources necessary to keep the Russian forces in the field for the purpose of defeating the Axis powers.

With reference to the Victory Production Program, the understanding of British and Russian requirements will make it possible to examine all needs with a view of integrating and relating them to the realities of production possibilities.


If the foregoing meets with your concurrence, I request that you inform me to this effect at your earliest convenience.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
                      
THE SECRETARY

September 10, 1941.

FOR MR. HOPKINS

The following is a paraphrase of London's telegram  
no. 4204, dated September 10, 11 p.m.:

 from Mr. Churchill for Mr. Hopkins.

Lord Beaverbrook and I are very satisfied with the  
arrangements which you proposed in your telegram of today.  
From this point I will carry on, and all arrangements are  
being made accordingly here.

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED

S:ASB



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CONFIDENTIAL

PARAPHRASE

Telegram no. 4204  
From: LONDON

Dated: 9/10/41 11 p.m.  
Rec'd: 9/10/41 5:45 p.m.

FROM THE PRIME MINISTER -- ~~SECRET~~ FOR MR.  
HARRY HOPKINS.

Lord Beaverbrook and I are in the most complete agreement with the suggested arrangements made in your most secret telegram of the tenth instant and accordingly we are making all necessary preparations. The whole party will be carried from here by me.

WINANT

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED

SA/E:DCB:BJA  
9/11/41

Copies to:  
Mr. Hopkins (2)  
Mr. Harriman (1)

Churchill Folder

SEPTEMBER 5, 1941

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

TO: AMEMBASSY

LONDON

FOR THE FORMER NAVAL PERSON FROM THE PRESIDENT  
REPLYING TO YOUR 4014 OF SEPTEMBER 1 I AM SURE  
WE CAN HELP WITH YOUR PROJECT TO REINFORCE THE MIDDLE  
EAST ARMY.

AT ANY RATE I CAN NOW ASSURE YOU THAT WE CAN  
PROVIDE TRANSPORTS FOR 20,000 MEN. THESE SHIPS WILL BE  
UNITED STATES NAVY TRANSPORTS MANNED BY NAVY CREWS. OUR  
NEUTRALITY ACT PERMITS PUBLIC SHIPS OF THE NAVY TO GO  
TO ANY PORT.

MARITIME COMMISSION IS ARRANGING TO PLACE TEN OR  
TWELVE ADDITIONAL SHIPS IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC RUN BETWEEN  
AMERICAN PORTS AND GREAT BRITAIN SO THAT YOU COULD  
RELEASE TEN OR TWELVE OF YOUR CARGO SHIPS FOR CARRYING  
CARGO TO THE MIDDLE EAST.

STARK IS CONSULTING WITH LITTLE AND LAND WITH  
SALTER IN REFERENCE TO DETAILS.

I AM LOANING TO YOU OUR BEST TRANSPORT SHIPS.  
INCIDENTALLY I AM DELIGHTED THAT YOU ARE GOING TO  
REINFORCE THE MIDDLE EAST.

FOR YOUR PRIVATE AND VERY CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION  
I AM PLANNING TO MAKE A RADIO ADDRESS MONDAY NIGHT  
RELATIVE TO THE ATTACK ON OUR DESTROYER AND TO MAKE  
PERFECTLY CLEAR THE ACTION WE INTEND TO TAKE IN THE  
ATLANTIC.

Crutchell Folker  
Grand 1-41

July 1941

TELEGRAM

TO: AMEMBASSY  
LONDON

~~SECRET~~ FROM THE PRESIDENT TO THE FORMER NAVAL PERSON.

WE ARE TRANSFERRING TO YOU AT ONCE FOR SHIPMENT TO THE MIDDLE EAST 490,000 ROUNDS 155 mm HOWITZER AMMUNITION 200 LIGHT TANKS FROM OUR JUNE AND JULY PRODUCTION COMPLETE WITH ARMAMENT SPARES AND ACCESSORIES 24 THREE INCH ANTTAIRCRAFT GUNS WITH FIRE CONTROL 12,000 ROUNDS THREE INCH AA SHRAPNEL 4 155 mm GUNS WITH ONCARRIAGE FIRE CONTROL 2,000 ROUNDS 155 mm GUN AMMUNITION AS SPECIFIED BY YOU 20 AIR COMPRESSOR TRUCKS 30 SETS SMALL BOX GIRDER BRIDGES WITH TRANSPORTERS 5 SETS HEAVY PONTONS WITH TRANSPORTERS 50 MOBILE LIGHTING SETS 100 SETS WATER SUPPLY EQUIPMENT 700 TEN TON TRUCKS 25 PORTABLE WELDING SETS VERY SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF MACHINERY AND TOOLS ROAD AND EXCAVATING EQUIPMENT MACHINE TOOLS ENGINEER STORES CONVEY EQUIPMENT QUARTERMASTER STORES AND SIGNAL EQUIPMENT. THESE WILL BE RUSHED AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT. WE NOW HAVE 44 AMERICAN FLAG SHIPS ASSIGNED TO MIDDLE EAST AND WE ARE PLANNING TO MOVE SOME 75,000 TONS OF FREIGHT TO THAT REGION. ALL OF THE ABOVE IS IN ADDITION TO ANY PREVIOUS COMMITMENTS WE HAVE MADE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST.

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

HLH/lmb



TELEGRAM

TO: AMEMBASSY  
LONDON

~~SECRET~~ FROM THE PRESIDENT TO THE FORMER NAVAL PERSON.

WE ARE TRANSFERRING TO YOU AT ONCE FOR SHIPMENT TO THE MIDDLE EAST 490,000 ROUNDS 155 mm HOWITZER AMMUNITION 200 LIGHT TANKS FROM OUR JUNE AND JULY PRODUCTION COMPLETE WITH ARMAMENT SPARES AND ACCESSORIES 24 THREE INCH ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS WITH FIRE CONTROL 12,000 ROUNDS THREE INCH AA SHRAPNEL 4 155 mm GUNS WITH ON-CARRIAGE FIRE CONTROL 2,000 ROUNDS 155 mm GUN AMMUNITION AS SPECIFIED BY YOU 20 AIR COMPRESSOR TRUCKS 30 SETS SMALL BOX GIRDER BRIDGES WITH TRANSPORTERS 5 SETS HEAVY PONTONS WITH TRANSPORTERS 50 MOBILE LIGHTING SETS 100 SETS WATER SUPPLY EQUIPMENT 700 TEN TON TRUCKS 25 PORTABLE WELDING SETS VERY SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF MACHINERY AND TOOLS ROAD AND EXCAVATING EQUIPMENT MACHINE TOOLS ENGINEER STORES SURVEY EQUIPMENT QUARTERMASTER STORES AND SIGNAL EQUIPMENT. THESE WILL BE RUSHED AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT. WE NOW HAVE 44 AMERICAN FLAG SHIPS ASSIGNED TO MIDDLE EAST AND WE ARE PLANNING TO MOVE SOME 75,000 TONS OF FREIGHT TO THAT REGION. ALL OF THE ABOVE IS IN ADDITION TO ANY PREVIOUS COMMITMENTS WE HAVE MADE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST.

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

HLH/lmb

TELEGRAM

July 12, 1941

TO: AMEMBASSY

LONDON

~~SECRET~~ FROM THE PRESIDENT TO THE FORMER NAVAL PERSON.

WE HAVE HAD A THOROUGH REVIEW OF OUR WHOLE TANK SITUATION HERE DURING THE LAST FEW DAYS AND I CAN NOW GIVE YOU THE FOLLOWING RESULTS.

WE PLAN TO INCREASE OUR PEAK PRODUCTION OF OUR MEDIUM TANK FROM 600 TO 1000 A MONTH REACHING THAT GOAL BY APRIL 1, 1942. WE WILL BUILD 600 MEDIUM TANKS MORE THAN WE HAD PLANNED PRIOR TO JANUARY 1. WE WILL INCREASE OUR LIGHT TANK PRODUCTION BY 150 PER MONTH SO THAT WE WILL HAVE 900 MORE LIGHT TANKS PRIOR TO JANUARY 1 than WE HAD PLANNED. ASSUMING THESE SCHEDULES ARE MAINTAINED, AND I BELIEVE THEY WILL BE, IT MEANS THAT WE CAN GIVE YOU 800 TO 1000 LIGHT TANKS AND 800 to 1000 MEDIUM TANKS PRIOR TO JANUARY 1. I WILL SEND YOU IN A FEW DAYS THE EXACT SCHEDULING OF THESE.

WE CAN ALSO AS OF AUGUST 1 START TRAINING 500 OF YOUR TANK CORPS MEN IN THIS COUNTRY IF YOU THINK THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL. WILL YOU LET ME KNOW ABOUT THIS SOON SO THAT WE CAN MAKE OUR PLANS IMMEDIATELY.

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

Miss Tully:

Bot.

MR. HOPKINS SENT THIS  
SATURDAY.

L. Berney



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

July 9, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR

H. H.

Will you prepare a reply  
to Churchill?

F. D. R.

TELEGRAM

TO: AMEMBASSY  
LONDON

~~SECRET~~ FROM THE PRESIDENT TO THE FORMER NAVAL PERSON

I HAVE GIVEN CONSIDERATION TO YOUR RECENT CABLE  
RELATIVE TO A JOINT ANGLO-AMERICAN TANK BOARD. WE  
HAVE HAD HERE FOR SOME MONTHS A JOINT BRITISH-AMERICAN  
TANK BOARD WHICH WE THINK HAS DONE SOME VERY GOOD WORK  
IN COORDINATING DESIGNS AND PRODUCTION. IT MAY BE  
THAT IT SHOULD HAVE SOME ADDITIONAL MEMBERS ON IT BUT  
I THINK IT WOULD BE VERY UNWISE TO CREATE A NEW BOARD  
IN THE LIGHT OF THE GOOD START WE HAVE ALREADY MADE.

I HAVE TAKEN STEPS TO GET OUR TANK PRODUCTION  
VERY SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED AND WILL LET YOU KNOW  
SOON THE NEW ESTIMATES.

ROOSEVELT

HLH/lmb  
7/10/41

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

WAR DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON

July 8, 1941.

Personal and Confidential

Dear Mr. President:

I received yesterday your personal and confidential letter in regard to cooperation with the British on tank design and the production of new tanks.

We already have a Joint Anglo-American Board set up for the purpose of controlling and coordinating such designs and production; and its success last summer and autumn in coordinating British and American designs, including the establishment of the turret in our tanks, was hailed by everybody as the outstanding success in British-American cooperation. I think that this already existing Board should be made the basis of the organization for imbibing the new lessons of recent combat.

If the British have any new suggestions which they wish to bring before it through personal witnesses, this can easily be accomplished by bringing such witnesses over here and bringing them into conference or substituting them for existing British members. It seems to me that the creation of an entirely new Board would add greatly to the complexity of the general set-up which has been working extremely well.

Faithfully yours,




Secretary of War.

The President,  
The White House.

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library  
DECLASSIFIED  
DOD DIR. 5200.9 (9/27/58)

Date- JUL 7 1971

Signature- 



*Boy*

TELEGRAM

July 6, 1941

TO: AMEMBASSY  
LONDON

~~SECRET~~ FROM THE PRESIDENT TO THE FORMER NAVAL PERSON  
REPLYING TO YOUR MESSAGE RELATIVE TO PROPOSED  
COMMITTEE ON TANK AND TANK DESIGN I AM EXPLORING THIS  
AT ONCE AND WILL ADVISE YOU.

ROOSEVELT

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

Churchill Folder

TELEGRAM

JUNE 25, 1941

TO: AMEMBASSY  
LONDON

**SECRET** FROM THE PRESIDENT TO THE FORMER NAVAL PERSON.

I AM ASKING CONGRESS IN A FEW DAYS FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASE OUR BUILDING OF MERCHANT SHIPS SO THAT WE SHOULD BUILD A MINIMUM OF FIVE TO FIVE AND HALF MILLION TONS IN 1942 AND SEVEN MILLION TONS IN 1943.

/s/ ROOSEVELT

HLH/lmb

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

June 26th

MISS TULLY:

THIS TELEGRAM WAS SENT LAST  
NIGHT BY MR. HOPKINS

L. BERNEY



Code Room - State

DRAFT

But

June 17, 1941.

FOR FORMER NAVAL PERSON

Army is studying possible ferry from Natal with idea that African landing places might be three in number -- Bathurst, Freetown and Liberia. I see no reason for any United States lease, but if the plan works out we would deliver the planes either in Natal or on African coast. Also, we would undertake the building of any necessary servicing facilities. I feel there should be three possible landing places because of proximity of Bathurst to Dakar. When your <sup>Vice</sup> Air Marshal arrives our people will immediately confer with him. I find a feeling here that up to recently there has been a good deal of delay in delivery between Takarabi and lower Egypt, chiefly through difficulty in servicing the small hopping stones on the way across the Continent. Please let me know how you regard the working out of this problem.

I have a distinct feeling in my bones that things are looking up <sup>with you and with us.</sup> After freezing the German and Italian assets on Saturday, I closed the German Consulates and Agencies yesterday, and the reaction here is, I should say, 90% favorable.

Rosen

TO: AMEMBASSY  
LONDON

REGRADED *May 29, 1941*  
UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~  
~~DRAFT OF DRAFT CABLE TO THE PRIME MINISTER~~

~~SECRET~~ FROM THE PRESIDENT TO THE FORMER NAVAL PERSON  
IN SPITE OF THE BEST EFFORTS OF THE ORGANIZATION NOW HANDLING FLIGHT  
DELIVERY OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT FROM THIS COUNTRY TO ENGLAND I AM ADVISED  
THAT SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF THESE PLANES ARE ACCUMULATING IN THIS  
COUNTRY AND THAT THIS CONDITION IS APT TO GROW WORSE AS PRODUCTION  
REACHES AN ACCELERATED RATE OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS PERIOD IN OUR  
COMMON INTEREST AND IN ORDER TO RELIEVE THE SITUATION AS MUCH AS POS-  
SIBLE I AM PREPARED TO DIRECT THE ARMY AND NAVY TO ASSUME FULL RESPON-  
SIBILITY FOR THE TRANSFER OF AMERICAN BUILT AIRCRAFT FROM FACTORY TO  
THE POINT OF ULTIMATE TAKE OFF AND TO SUPPLY MAINTENANCE AND SERVICING  
FACILITIES ALONG THE WAY AND AT THE ULTIMATE STAGING FIELD PERIOD THIS  
SHOULD RELEASE A NUMBER OF CIVILIAN PILOTS NOW DELIVERING PLANES PERIOD  
MANY SUCH PILOTS CAN REASONABLY BE EXPECTED TO INCREASE THE POOL OF  
ATLANTIC FERRY PILOTS NOW ENGAGED IN THIS WORK PERIOD SINCE MILITARY  
AND NAVAL PILOTS AND GROUND CREWS WOULD BE ENGAGED IN DELIVERY OF PLANES  
I AM ADVISED THAT THE CLOSE COOPERATION NECESSARY TO CARRY THROUGH suc-  
CESSFULLY THIS CONTINUOUS OPERATION CAN BEST BE OBTAINED IF RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR THE ATLANTIC FLIGHT COULD BE UNDERTAKEN BY THEIR SISTER SERVICE UNDER  
THE AIR MINISTRY USING OF COURSE THE PRESENT CIVILIAN PILOTS AND SUCH  
ADDITIONAL ONES AS MAY BECOME AVAILABLE PERIOD THIS PROCEDURE WOULD EN-  
ABLE THE PLANES TO BE BROUGHT UNDER THE CONTROL AND DIRECTION OF THE  
ROYAL AIR FORCE PRIOR TO THE SCHEDULING OF TAKE OFF AND  
APPROACH TO THEIR DESIGNATED LANDING FIELDS IN ENGLAND PERIOD THE SUCCESS  
OF THIS OPERATION WOULD DEPEND IN LARGE PART UPON THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE  
WESTBOUND AIR TRANSPORTATION BUT I AM CONFIDENT THAT WITH GOOD WILL ON BOTH  
SIDES SUCH PROBLEMS CAN BE SOLVED AND GREATER ASSURANCES GIVEN OF THE  
ABILITY TO HANDLE DELIVERY OF THE INCREASED QUANTITY OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT  
ANTICIPATED DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS PERIOD I HOPE YOU WILL COMMENT  
FRANKLY ON THIS PROPOSAL.

*For example the American  
Army and Navy could deliver planes at Portwood  
Newfoundland ready and serviced for the R. A. F.  
to take them over and fly them across.  
Later and depending on developments we might be able  
to deliver them to your people in Iceland. Roosevelt*

~~SECRET~~

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Commodore Lawrence  
For Former Naval Reserve -

I hope you will like the  
speech tonight - It goes  
farther than I thought was  
possible even two weeks  
ago and I like to hope  
that it will receive general  
approval from the fairly  
large element which has  
even reinforced by details  
and small Roberts D  
for the similar facts.



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

All of us are made  
very happy by the fine  
tracking down of the  
Bismarck and that she  
is ~~gone~~ literally gone  
for good.

Respectfully

Churchill Folder  
Branes!

CABLEGRAM

May 27, 1941.

AMEMBASSY  
LONDON

FOR FORMER NAVAL PERSON

I hope you will like the speech tonight. It goes farther than I thought was possible even two weeks ago and I like to hope that it will receive general approval from the fairly large element which has been confused by details and unable hitherto to see the simpler facts.

All of us are made very happy by the fine tracking down of the Bismarck and that she is literally gone for good.

ROOSEVELT

*Dictated by the President*

May 19, 1941.

FOR WINANT  
AMEMBASSY  
LONDON

I wish you would explain very confidentially and entirely off the record to Former Naval Person that I am frankly placed in a most embarrassing situation in regard to Willkie's telegram and the suggested answer.

Quite aside from the Logan Act, and solely on the formation and maintenance of public opinion here, it would be very serious if it became known publicly that Mr. Willkie, who is giving splendid cooperation to all of us, were communicating directly with the Prime Minister and receiving direct replies, especially in view of fact that communications go through the Consul General in New York.

Such communications are almost sure to leak out and the revulsion of feeling in the Congress and the Administration would be very bad. I can only suggest that the Prime Minister send a friendly reply thanking Willkie for his telegram, going into no details, agreeing that obviously the joint policy must be flexible and constantly changing, and suggesting that Mr. Willkie keep in touch in regard to details with the British Ambassador and me. We must not get our wires crossed.

(A)



I think the Prime Minister should maintain the friendliest of relations with Mr. Willkie but direct communication is a two-edged sword.

I think any reply should go either through you and this Department or through Halifax here and this Department.

HULL

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

INSERT A

For example, the statement  
attributed to Forrestal in the  
Press was never made by him.

**PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**

**AMEMBASSY**

**FOR FORMER NAVAL PERSON**

If Hess is talking, or does so in the future, it would be very valuable to public opinion over here if he can be persuaded to tell your people what Hitler has said about the United States, or what German's plans really are in relation to the United States or to other parts of the Western Hemisphere, including commerce, infiltration, military domination, encirclement of the United States, etc.

From this distance I can assure you that the Hess flight has captured the American imagination and the story should be kept alive for just as many days or even weeks as possible.

If he says anything about the Americas in the course of telling his story, it should be kept separate from other parts and featured by itself.

I have nothing specific from Vichy yet. I am *Weygand* not hopeful of any concrete orders to Darlan to resist but we may still pull some of the chestnuts out of the fire.

**ROOSEVELT**

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

May 14, 1941

Memorandum For The President.

Rudolph Hess

Possibly this idea is crudely amateurish; probably a number of people have already thought of it. Certainly there are a number of "ifs" involved -- the "ifs" of sanity, of good intentions, and of truth. But it might be worth trying.

The flight of Rudolph Hess has captured the American imagination as has nothing since the flight of the lamented Lindbergh. It may only be a seven-day wonder but the "man in the street" today regards it as a wonder.

No amount of conversation about economic penetration of South America or Nazi trade wars, or even the necessity for survival of the British navy seems to have convinced the American people, particularly the middle and far West, that this country is in danger from the Nazis.

But if Hess were to tell the world what Hitler has said about the United States, it would be a headline sensation. The people would begin to wake up. Recollection of the unpleasant Zinovieff letter indicates the possibilities. I am suggesting, of course, only that Hess make such a statement if it is true -- which it is.

If the idea is worthwhile, it should be done soon, while the American people are fascinated. It certainly should not be included with a great number of other things, such as Hitler's rapprochement with Russia, the economic conditions of Germany, etc. It should probably be done with American newspapermen present; otherwise the Nazis -- as they already are beginning to do -- will recreate the American suspicion of British propaganda.

I know you and I think Churchill can see the possibilities; I doubt if the professional career servant will.

But, if there is anything to the idea it should be done in the next day or so; otherwise it will not be believed.

JHR  
James Rowe, Jr.

260-111  
S.E. Cape  
J. E. Farrell

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

May 14, 1941

Memorandum For Miss LeHand.

Dear Missy:

Rudolph Hess

Because you told me that someone else had the same idea I had and that Steve Early sent him up to the British Embassy, I thought you might not give the President my memorandum today.

I have been trained as a skeptic in all things -- and I include Hess -- but, assuming this idea is worthwhile, it will never get anywhere with the professional career men in the British Embassy or the State Department.

It is a "telephone" job between the President and Churchill, both of whom have imagination enough to see the advantage to both countries, and also because time is of the essence. Even tomorrow may be too late.

JHR  
James Rowe, Jr.

*Boyd*

TELEGRAM

TO: WINANT  
LONDON

~~SECRET~~ FROM THE PRESIDENT TO THE FORMER NAVAL  
PERSON.

ALL PLANS DISCUSSED WITH YOU BY ARNOLD FOR  
TRAINING PILOTS HAVE BEEN APPROVED HERE. THERE ARE  
NO LEGAL DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY AND THE TRAINING  
CAN BEGIN PROMPTLY. WE ARE RUSHING SIX ADDITIONAL  
SMALL AIRCRAFT CARRIERS FOR YOU. FIRST THREE SHOULD  
BE AVAILABLE IN THREE OR FOUR MONTHS.

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED



AMERICAN EMBASSY  
LONDON

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

Your 1753, May 3, midnight.

FOR FORMER NAVAL PERSON FROM THE PRESIDENT.

In my message of May 1 I did not intend to minimize in any degree the gravity of the situation, particularly as regards the Mediterranean. I am well aware of its great strategic importance and I share your anxiety in regard to it.

I saw General Whiteley while he was here and heard from him the magnificent effort of Wavell's army and Cunningham's and Summerville's fleet. I have issued instructions that supplies in so far as they are available here are to be rushed to the Middle East at the earliest possible moment. Thirty ships are now being mobilized to go within the next three weeks to the Middle East. I want to emphasize we intend to continue the supplies and to get the ships to carry them until there is a final decision in the Mediterranean. I know of your determination to win on that front and we shall do everything that we possibly to help you do it.

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

*Churchill Folder  
1-41  
5/4 C.N. + 2 W.  
This seems to be  
better than draft -  
If ok. please send  
JWR*

My previous message merely meant to indicate that should the Mediterranean prove in the last analysis to be a <sup>on the</sup> possible battle ground that I do not feel that the fact alone <sup>such</sup> ~~mean~~ <sup>would</sup> the defeat of our mutual interests. I say this because I believe the outcome of this struggle is going to be decided in the Atlantic and unless Hitler can win there he cannot win ~~at all.~~ *anywhere in the world in the end*

I cannot speak too highly of the admiration which the American people hold toward your generals, admirals, troops, airmen and sailors who fought in Greece and are now fighting in the Mediterranean and Africa. I think the feeling in America is that the efforts which your country made to stem the tide in Greece was a worthy effort and the delaying action which you fought there <sup>greatly</sup> must have ~~weakened your enemy.~~ *the axis*

I have now received through Ambassador Leahy a reiteration of Marshall Petain's assurances that he does not intend to agree to any collaboration by France that is beyond the requirements of the armistice agreement; that he has publicly stated that he will not consent to any offensive action against his former ally. While he states that Germany has no need of a passage for its troops through unoccupied France to

the Spanish frontier<sup>and</sup> that he is endeavoring to limit the number of Germans in the African colonies, Leahy points out that it is accepted at Vichy that a refusal of the Marshall to agree to German demands would have little or no deterrent effects upon the Germans. Petain had no comment to make upon the British Government's offer of assistance transmitted through Leahy and I gather that he feels that France can do nothing to prevent the arrival of German troops in Spanish Morocco which he, Petain, considers imminent. Leahy believes that Petain has the genuine support of all of the French people but that they do not share the same confidence in Darlan. He further believes that most of the people are openly or secretly supporting your cause. We are sending instructions to Leahy to urge Petain to issue orders to all French authorities <sup>specially</sup> to resist Germany in any attempt to violate French territory or to use it as a base for military operations.

Our patrols are pushing farther out into the Atlantic. I have just added all of our <sup>former</sup> units of the Coast Guard to the Navy for the purpose of implementing that patrol. Other steps to strengthen that patrol will be taken soon.

With this message goes my warm personal regards to you.



DRAFT OF CABLE

May 1, 1941.

AMEMBASSY, LONDON  
FOR FORMER NAVAL PERSON

1. In relation to paragraph 14 of yours of April 23 we received strong protests from Portuguese Government in regard to a proposed friendly visit to Azores or Cape Verd Islands at this time. In view of this we deferred proposed visit, but have not received recommendation from Ambassador in Spain that friendly visit plan be carried out, but that no fuel be taken on in the Islands. The new patrol now going into operation will extend to westerly side both island groups, but planes will not be flown over the islands themselves.

It is, of course, of utmost importance, in my judgment, that you send no expedition to either place unless Portugal is attacked or you get definite word

of an immediate German attack on the islands. Furthermore, I know you will not mind my saying that in the event of a British expeditionary force you make it very clear to American people that in case of Azores it is for purpose of British defense and not for permanent occupation. In other words, that Britain will restore islands to Portuguese sovereignty at close of war if Portugal is restored as an independent nation. The reason I suggest this is that, as you know, most of Azores are in Western Hemisphere under my longitudinal map reading.

2. Our patrol is already on way to take positions assigned, and I think liason work between the two naval services is being established satisfactorily.

3. In regard to yours of April 29, my thought in regard to eastern Mediterranean is ~~is~~

(a) You have done not only heroic, but very useful work in Greece and the territorial loss is more than compensated for by necessity for enormous German concentration and resulting enormous German losses in men and materiel.

(b) Having sent all men and equipment to Greece you could possibly spare, you have fought a wholly justified delaying action and will continue to do so in other parts of Eastern Mediterranean, including North Africa and the Near East. Furthermore, that if additional withdrawals become necessary, they will all be a part of the plan which at this stage of the war shortens British Lines, greatly extends the Axis lines, and compels the enemy to expend great quantities of men and equipment. I am satisfied that both here and in Britain public opinion is growing to realize that even if you have to withdraw further in the Eastern Mediterranean, you will not allow any great debacle or surrender, and that in the last analysis the Naval control of the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean will in time win the war.



(c) In regard to Turkey, I fear there is little we can do except to stiffen them morally and leave it to you to send such equipment to them as you can spare from American shipments going to the Red Sea.

(d) I think of the Syrian problem as almost identical with the French problem in North Africa. I do not think there is any chance of persuading Vichy to break with the Germans, if the latter violate Syria or North Africa. I wish you would let me have your views on the following policy, which I would be glad to introduce:

(1) Recognize that Vichy is in a German cage and still issues orders to Weygand, Syria and Indo-China.

(2) That because Vichy has already ordered French Colonies to resist British occupation, Vichy can and ought to issue orders to Colonies equally to resist German occupation.

(3) United States can as quid pro quo for such orders send two more children's food ships to Marseilles and offer to send oil and perhaps some ammunition and other munitions to Weygand on West Coast of Morroco, this being conditioned, of course, on agreement of Weygand to resist German occupation.

(4) At same time it is at least possible that if Weygand gets orders to resist Germans and agrees to do so, he would put up a strong rear-guard defense, moving slowly forward toward Casablanca.

(e) If Germany crosses Straits of Gibraltar with land forces, she can probably eventually occupy Tunis, Algiers and Morroco down to Casablanca, but it is of utmost importance to keep Germans out of the Moroccan parts as long as possible, including Port of Sismos in Rio de Oro. We think it almost impossible for Germans to reach Dakar over land,

especially with what is left of French Army and Navy concentrated there.

(f) Personally, I am not downcast by mere spread of Germany for additional large territories. There is little of raw materials in all of them put together -- not enough to maintain nor compensate for huge occupation forces. The exception is oil in Mossul and Iraq and I assume production there could be practically destroyed by you in event of necessity.

5. Your talk Sunday night was splendid. Confidentially, I expect to go on air within next two weeks.
6. Keep up the good work.



April 11, 1941.

Amembassy,  
London.  
For Former Naval Person

**REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED**

~~VERY CONFIDENTIAL~~

We propose immediately to take the following steps in relation to the security of the Western Hemisphere, which steps will favorably affect your shipping problem. It is important for domestic political reasons which you will readily understand that this action be taken by us unilaterally and not after diplomatic conversations between you and us. Therefore before taking this unilateral action I want to tell you about the proposal.

This Government proposes to extend the present so-called security zone and patrol areas which have been in effect since very early in the War to a line covering all North Atlantic waters west of about west longitude 25 degrees. We propose to utilize aircraft and naval vessels working from Greenland, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, the United States, Bermuda and West Indies, with possible later extension to Brazil if this can be arranged. We will want in great secrecy notification of movement of convoys so our patrol units can seek out any ships or planes of aggressor nations operating west of the new line of the security zone. We will immediately make public to you position aggressor ships or planes when located in our patrol area west of West longitude 25 degrees.

We propose to refuel our ships at sea where advisable. We suggest your longer shipping hauls move as much as possible west of new line up to latitude of the Northwest approaches.

We have declared Red Sea area no longer a combat zone. We propose sending all types of goods in unarmed American flag ships to Egypt or any other non-belligerent port via ~~Red~~ Red Sea or Persian Gulf. We think we can work out sending wheat and other goods in American ships to Greenland or Iceland through the next six months.

We hope to make available for direct haul to England a large amount of your present shipping which is now utilized for other purposes. We expect to make use of Danish ships very soon and Italian ships in about two months.

I believe advisable that when this new policy is adopted here no statement be issued on your end. It is not certain I would make specific announcement. I may decide to issue necessary naval operations orders and let time bring out the existence of the new patrol area.

ROOSEVELT.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

April 2, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE CODE ROOM  
STATE DEPARTMENT

The President would like  
to have you send the enclosed  
message.

M. A. Le Hand  
PRIVATE SECRETARY



# TELEGRAM

OFFICIAL BUSINESS—GOVERNMENT RATES

CABLEGRAM

FROM

The White House  
Washington

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 193254

April 2, 1941.

TO A FORMER NAVAL PERSON

I have this morning allotted funds for the building  
of 58 additional shipping ways and 200 additional ships stop  
I have also made complete arrangements for repairs to  
merchant ships and for your larger friends

ROOSEVELT

O.K.

F. D. R.

## U. S. NAVAL COMMUNICATION SERVICE

SRS

Churchill folder  
1-11  
✓FROM: THE PRESIDENT  
TO: NAVY DEPARTMENT292380  
~~300750~~

29 March 1941

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED~~SECRET~~ PRIORITY

FOR FORMER NAVAL PERSON LONDON I HAVE TODAY MADE ALLOTMENTS FOR SUBSTANTIAL QUANTITIES FOOD AND FOR IMMEDIATE PURCHASE FIFTYFOUR HUNDRED AIRPLANES FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND THOMPSON SUBMACHINE GUNS THIRTYFOUR HUNDRED UNIVERSAL CARRIERS AND SUBSTANTIAL QUANTITIES OF OTHER MISCELLANEOUS MILITARY EQUIPMENT X I HAVE ALSO AUTHORIZED FIFTYFIVE HUNDRED OERLIKON GUNS AND AMMUNITION FOR THEM X SIXTY PATROL BOMBING ~~PLANE~~ PLANES AND ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY NAVY FIGHTING PLANES X THESE ACTIONS WILL BE FOLLOWED IN THE NEAR FUTURE AS SOON AS I HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO CONFER WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVES AND THEIR OPPOSITES IN OUR GOVERNMENT X YOU CAN BE SURE THESE MATTERS WILL BE PROSECUTED ~~XXX~~ VIGOROUSLY HERE SIGNED ROOSEVELT

Churchill  
1-41

March 8, 1941

Cable

American Ambassador  
London

For Former Naval Person  
Personal

Notwithstanding long  
delay the ultimate <sup>①</sup> passage  
by ~~the~~ vote of 60 to 31 is  
highly satisfactory.  
Final concurrent action  
by the House followed  
by my signature should take  
place Tuesday evening.  
Confidentially I hope to send  
estimate for new orders ~~under~~  
+ purchases under the Bill  
to the House on Wednesday.